

The Gendered Shackles of the Would-Be “Madame President”: A Rhetorical Analysis of Hillary Clinton’s Campaign Communication during the 2008 Democratic Presidential Primary

BY

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The Gendered Shackles of the Would-Be “Madame President”: A Rhetorical Analysis of Hillary Clinton’s Campaign Communication during the 2008 Democratic Presidential Primary

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Date Defended _____

This work is dedicated to all of the daring women who have ever tried to break the highest and hardest glass ceiling in the United States (in chronological order):

Victoria Woodhull (1872, 1892)
Belva Lockwood (1884, 1888)
Grace Allen (1940)
Margaret Chase Smith (1964)
Charlene Mitchell (1968)
Shirley Chisholm (1972)
Patsy Takemoto Mink (1972)
Bella Abzug (1972)
Linda Osteen Jenness (1972)
Evelyn Reed (1972)
Ellen McCormack (1976, 1980)
Margaret Wright (1976)
Deidre Griswold (1980)
Maureen Smith (1980)
Sonia Johnson (1984)
Patricia Schroeder (1984, 1988)
Gavrielle Holmes (1984)
Isabelle Masters (1984, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004)
Lenora Fulani (1988, 1992)
Willa Kenoyer (1988)
Gloria E. LaRiva (1992)
Susan Block (1992)
Helen Halyard (1992)
Millie Howard (1992, 1996, 2000, 2008)
Monica Moorehead (1996, 2000)
Marsha Feinland (1996)
Mary Cal Hollis (1996)
Heather Anne Harder (1996)
Elvena E. Lloyd-Duffie (1996)
Georgina H. Doerschuck (1996)
Susan Gail Ducey (1996)
Ann Jennings (1996)
Diane Beall Templin (1996)
Joanne Jorgensen (1996)
Elizabeth Dole (2000)
Cathy Gordon Brown (2000)
Carol Moseley Braun (2004)
Hillary Rodham Clinton (2008)

...from now on, it will be unremarkable for a woman to win primary state victories, unremarkable to have a woman in a close race to be our nominee, unremarkable to think that a woman can be the President of the United States. And that is truly remarkable.

—Hillary Rodham Clinton, June 7, 2008

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Abstract

This study analyzes Hillary Rodham Clinton's key speeches and debate performances during the 2008 Democrat presidential primary. Specifically, a rhetorical criticism of Clinton's discourse, utilizing Bitzer's "rhetorical situation," indicates that Clinton's discourse was highly constrained by her gender, and supports the theory that women candidates experience tangible double binds. Specifically, Clinton's rhetoric was hindered in terms of her audience because of her initial status as the frontrunner, the erosion of her female voting base, her lack of response to sexism, her use of negative campaigning, and her appeals to super delegates. The exigencies identified in Clinton's discourse reflect tangible, gendered double binds as she approached the historic nature of her candidacy, universal health care, the war in Iraq, and her general election strategy. Finally, the analysis indicates her attempts to establish experience, her negative reputation, Obama's key campaign strategies, and Bill Clinton's presence on the trail created constraints.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter One: Introduction/Rationale/Review of Literature | 8 |
| Rationale One: Why Study Hillary Clinton? | 12 |
| Rationale Two: Artifacts | 14 |
| Review of Literature | 16 |
| The ‘Double Bind’ for Political Women | 17 |
| Gendered Traits of Male and Female Political Communicators | 21 |
| Gendered Issues for Male and Female Political Communicators | 25 |
| Gender and Voting Behavior in the United States | 27 |
| Media and Gender in Politics | 31 |
| Gender and Leadership in the Political, Public Sphere | 35 |
| Chapter Two: Methodology | 48 |
| The 2008 Democratic Presidential Nominating Race | 54 |
| Artifacts for Study | 66 |
| Chapter Three: Analysis of Clinton’s Audience | 68 |
| Perceptions Regarding Clinton’s Initial Status as the Frontrunner | 71 |
| The Erosion of Clinton’s Female Voting Base | 81 |
| Clinton’s Response to Sexism | 85 |
| Voters’ Perceptions of Clinton’s Use of Negative Campaigning | 90 |
| Clinton’s Appeals to Super Delegates | 102 |
| Chapter Summary | 109 |
| Chapter Four: Analysis of Clinton’s Exigencies | 111 |
| The Historic Nature of the Campaign as Exigence | 113 |
| Clinton’s Health Care Exigence as Double Bind | 124 |
| Clinton’s War in Iraq Exigence as Double Bind | 131 |
| Clinton’s General Election Strategy for the Primary Campaign as Exigence | 143 |
| Chapter Summary | 154 |
| Chapter Five: Analysis of Clinton’s Constraints | 156 |
| Experience as Constraint for Clinton’s Campaign Rhetoric | 158 |
| Experience as Constraint in Clinton’s Speeches | 161 |
| Experience as Constraint in Clinton’s Debate Performances | 165 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Perceptions of Clinton's Reputation as Rhetorical Constraint | 181 |
| Reputation as Constraint in Clinton's Speeches | 189 |
| Reputation as Constraint in Clinton's Debate Performances | 193 |
| Obama's Campaign Strategies as Constraints for Clinton's Rhetoric | 206 |
| Obama's Strategies as Constraint in Clinton's Speeches | 214 |
| Obama's Strategies as Constraint in Clinton's Debate Performances | 221 |
| Bill Clinton as Constraint for Hillary Clinton's Campaign | 224 |
| Bill Clinton as Constraint in Hillary Clinton's Debate Performances | 231 |
| Chapter Summary | 238 |
| Chapter Six: Critical Conclusions | 242 |
| Clinton's Inescapable Double Binds | 244 |
| Clinton's Presentation of Male and Female Traits | 249 |
| Clinton's Use of Masculine and Feminine Issues | 252 |
| Clinton's Handling of Voter's Gendered Expectations and Assumptions | 253 |
| Clinton and News Media: Implicit and Explicit Sexism | 256 |
| Hillary Clinton's Leadership Style | 258 |
| Implications / Limitations / Suggestions for Future Research | 260 |
| References | 266 |

Chapter One: Introduction/Rationale/Review of Literature

Over seventy years ago when George Gallup first asked voters whether or not they would consider voting for a woman for president, an overwhelming majority (65%) said that they would not (Clift & Brazaitis, 2000). Now, as the first decade of the 21st century comes to an end, there are only a small percentage of voters who would be unwilling to accept the “fairer sex” in the role of commander in chief (Streb, et al., 2008). Unfortunately, women in America, as well as those in the vast majority of nations around the world, remain largely unrepresented or under-represented in high levels of political office. According to the UN 2000 report “The World’s Women 2000,” “women today are fewer than one-tenth of the world’s cabinet ministers and hold fewer than one-fifth of all subministerial positions” (in Norris & Inglehart, 1998, p. 245). This lack of representation marginalizes the majority of world citizens, and American citizens specifically, by keeping women out of the public sphere of governmental representation. Furthermore, it should also give scholars of political communication and political science pause, as this lack of representation is occurring at a time when the vast majority of people feel that more and more tangible barriers to women’s equality are coming down, and that “equal treatment is an accomplished fact” (Rhode, 2003, p. 6).

In the United States, the lack of political representation is most striking, considering that women make up a majority of the population yet enjoy no such majority in elective office. According to the Eagleton Institute of Politics’ Center for American Women in Politics (2010), only forty women have ever held a federal level cabinet position, and only two percent (or 256) of all federal congressional representatives since 1789 have been women. The center also indicated that women currently hold only 22.9% of all statewide elected offices, and only six women are currently serving as governors of states in the U.S. The Eagleton Institute also

reported that in 2010, only 24.4% of the 7,382 state legislators in the United States are women, and that women represent only 17.6% of mayors of large cities. This stark lack of representation in numbers has led several scholars, including Rosenthal (1998a), to note, “For much of the nation’s history, women have largely been invisible as political leaders” (p. 161). Still, today more than at any other time in American history, women are making strides. Hillary Rodham Clinton is a prominent example of a woman breaking many barriers: she is the only First Lady in history to win high elective office as the junior U. S. Senate seat in New York in 2001, and she was also the first viable major party female candidate for the presidency. Nancy Pelosi is currently serving as the first woman Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives. Additionally, the United States has had three female Secretaries of State in the last three administrations, a compelling fact given the current international crises with nations that do not seemingly hold positive views of female governmental leadership or females in general. Still, these examples, while worthy of praise for their symbolic representation, are not the norm.

Reflecting on Hillary Clinton specifically, Kathleen Hall Jamieson once noted, “When the history of Hillary is written, it will say that she was caught in a historical time warp...At a time when a majority of American women work outside the home in all professions, she thought she would be accepted. But Americans are still conflicted about the roles women play in public and private life” (in Clift & Brazaitis, 2000). When Hillary Clinton began her campaign for the presidency in January 2007, many Americans were hopeful that she would be the first woman to break the “ultimate” glass ceiling and become the first female president in our nation’s history. Clinton’s ability to blaze new trails for women compelled Marie Wilson, who created the nonpartisan White House Project to help women and teenage girls see themselves as future officeholders, to note, “Seeing...Hillary Clinton running for the presidency is really powerful for

girls...[because, after all]...you can't be what you can't see" (Evans, 2007). It is the powerful symbolic nature of Clinton's campaign—as the first viable female candidate for the presidency in the United States—that requires a clearer examination of her campaign. Was Clinton a victim of stereotypes and expectations associated with her gender, or was something else at work in her campaign communication that led to her failure? Seeking an explanation to these basic questions is one of the major goals of this study.

Initially, Clinton was a powerful force on the campaign trail. Until her loss in the Iowa caucuses, Clinton was ahead in fund raising, and every major poll had her solidly ahead of her most immediate rivals Barack Obama and John Edwards (Crowley, et al., 2007; Healy, 2007c). Still, history tells the tale succinctly: Clinton, though she did win several races in key primary states, eventually conceded in June 2008 to her chief rival, Barack Obama, and her quest for the presidency ended in defeat. Why this outcome occurred is debatable, though several scholars have already offered some educated guesses. Torrens (2009) echoed the belief of many political reporters and pundits in claiming that Hillary lost the primary contest because of the negative associations derived from her marriage to former president Bill Clinton and the varying embarrassments he caused on the campaign trail. Similarly, Schnoebelen, Carlin, and Warner (2009) argued that the negative gendered connotations and assumptions that bound Hillary to the role of the First Lady made it impossible to negotiate the tension between her overtly feminine roles in politics with the masculine demands of her presidential aspirations. Both of these studies and several others, featured in Theodore Sheckles' edited volume dedicated to enumerating the reasons Hillary Clinton lost her bid for the presidency, tie Clinton's loss to her gender in clear ways. It deserves mentioning that this edited volume, like many other academic studies centered on Clinton, served primarily to draw readers' attention to one key issue that served as a barrier to

Clinton's political ambitions: the fact that she was a woman trying to operate in the ultimately masculine world of American politics.

This study adopts a similar standpoint, affirming the idea that Clinton's gender played a crucial factor in her defeat. However, instead of simply acknowledging this idea as fact, as several sources that will be presented later often do, this study seeks a broader explanation through Clinton's rhetorical style and tactics during her campaign. Simply put, the goal of this study is to describe and critique the rhetoric used by Clinton to overcome the myriad rhetorical problems that she faced during the eighteen-month primary race for the Democratic Party nomination. I argue that the lengthy race, viewed through Bitzer's lens of the 'rhetorical situation' presented Clinton with many rhetorical problems given her distinct nature as the first viable female contender for the highest office in the United States. I also argue that it is necessary to investigate and critique the rhetorical situation of the 2008 Democratic primary and how Clinton addressed the constraints posed therein. Such analysis offers a more holistic view of Clinton's rhetoric and demonstrates the tangible barriers facing many women as they seek high elective office. Thus, to accomplish the general goal of describing the rhetorical situation of Clinton's campaign as a prelude to a critique of her rhetorical response to the existing constraints, this study examines several of Clinton's key campaign speeches and Democratic primary debate performances. Specifically, I assert that Clinton's gender was the crucial factor governing her rhetorical situation, and that gender conventions, stereotypes, and expectations are the basis for understanding the audience, exigencies and resulting constraints. And while this study does not proceed from the assumption that gender was the only factor in the 2008 Democratic Primary campaign, I do contend that gender was certainly one of the most crucial

factors in terms of Clinton's specific rhetorical situation and her response or lack of response to that aspect of the rhetorical situation helps explain the electoral outcome.

Before the specific methodology and artifacts for study are presented in Chapter Two, the specific rationale and review of literature is offered to frame the constraints posed by Clinton's gender as she sought the nomination, as well as the cultural beliefs regarding women in politics that comprised the backdrop for Clinton's campaign. These sections also point out the current gaps in our literature base, demonstrating the merit of this study, and highlight some general questions that guide the analysis.

Rationale One: Why Study Hillary Clinton?

Hillary Clinton has been the focus of several studies within and outside of communication studies since Bill Clinton won the presidency in 1992 (Anderson, 2002; Corrigan, 2000; Dubriwny, 2005; Gardetto, 1997; Kelly, 2001; Mattina, 2005; Parry-Giles, 2000; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002; Trent & Short-Thompson, 2003; Wertheimer, 2005). Overall, these scholars have observed both the traditional and non-traditional behaviors exhibited by Clinton as she performed her roles as First Lady or candidate for the U.S. Senate from New York. The vast majority of these studies have demonstrated that Clinton often broke with convention in terms of gender performance. And while some of these scholars contended that Clinton effectively adapted her communication strategies to bend to the demands of her various roles, others have argued that she was unsuccessful. Still, what is common to all of these scholars is the firm belief that the ways in which Clinton communicated—about her roles, her career, her responses to media and citizen criticism—are significant for understanding the ways in which women who are not traditionally feminine operate in the public, political sphere. Thus, Clinton serves as a worthy rhetor for study so that scholars may understand more fully how political women rhetorically

construct themselves in the face of socio-political pressures to remain feminine and what the potential costs are if they fail to do so.

Other scholars have more recently begun to examine, as I do in this study, Clinton's failures in her bid for the presidential nomination. Carlin and Winfrey (2009) maintained that examining Clinton's campaign, especially her treatment of and by media sources, is important in terms of understanding the perpetuation of sexism in politics. Spiker (2009) agreed, and argued in her rhetorical analysis of Clinton's campaign speeches and interviews that examining Clinton's campaign is an essential task in understanding how feminism can both help and hinder a woman's aspirations for the presidency. Thus, in order to more fully understand the rhetorical problems faced by women who run for president, an examination of Clinton's campaign is warranted.

Of the studies that have examined Clinton's campaign for president, some have looked at Bill Clinton's involvement in Hillary's campaign (Kenner Muir & Taylor, 2009; Schnoebelen, et al., 2009; Torrens, 2009), one has examined her debate strategies via quantitative content analysis that looked at the traditional argument structure absent gender variations (McKinney, et al., 2009), one has presented a cursory rhetorical analysis of Clinton's speeches and interviews on the trail (Spiker, 2009), one has examined Clinton's primary campaign ads via content analysis (Banwart, et al., 2009), and two have examined the media attention (often negative) surrounding Clinton during the primary campaign (Stein, 2009; Vatz, 2009). Thus, no study to date has offered a rhetorical analysis of both her key speeches and debate performances in relation to the rhetorical situation that Clinton faced. Thus, this study adds to the discussion of Clinton's campaign and adds unique insight as to the societal trends—stereotypes, gendered

expectations, barriers and double binds, etc.—that Hillary Clinton attempted to negotiate during her campaign.

Such an examination also, I contend, helps offer insight to women in the future who follow in Clinton's footsteps as they attempt to negotiate the gendered nature of the public, political sphere. Sheckels (2009) noted: "All political campaigns teach lessons, but some do so more than others. I would suggest that Hillary Rodham Clinton's quest for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination is one of the richest in recent history insofar as it reinforces what we know about political campaigns and sheds considerable light on how gender still affects such campaigns" (p. 211). I absolutely agree with Sheckels estimation of the significance of Clinton's campaign, and argue that the analysis within this study throws such stereotypes into sharp relief as I analyze not only Clinton's rhetoric, but also the exigencies, audiences, and constraints that mandated or helped foster such rhetoric. Evaluating the campaign's communication in such a way allows critics to demonstrate not only the nature of these challenges for Clinton, but also their pervasive nature in contemporary politics in the United States.

Rationale Two: Artifacts

To accomplish an analysis of Clinton's rhetorical style, this study focuses on examples of key speeches Clinton gave while running for president as well as some of her more salient debate performances during the primary season. Both of these arenas of political rhetoric, in conjunction with secondary news sources used to contextualize the rhetorical situation, offer rich, fertile ground for establishing Clinton's rhetoric in relation to the exigencies, audiences, and constraints. These rhetorical acts were all performed in diverse locales and in front of diverse immediate audiences and focused attention on nearly all salient issues and problems during the entirety of the campaign season relative to her male adversaries on the trail.

Scholarly attention to campaign speeches, especially during a presidential campaign, is an established focus for scholarly understanding of campaign success or failure (rhetorical or otherwise) (Kaid, 2004). Additionally, presidential primary debates have garnered little scholarly attention (compared to presidential debates) (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; McKinney & Carlin, 2004), and even less attention has been paid to those studies involving mixed-gendered political debates (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Holbert & Geidner, 2009). Thus, the current study, in approaching both the well-established realm of campaign speeches and the emerging arena of cross-gendered primary debate research, has the potential to add much to what we know about women in political communication contexts, chiefly the presidential race, and how they react to the gendered nature of their rhetorical situations. As such, attention to Clinton's campaign speeches, which are conveniently (and purposefully) available on Clinton's campaign website and in various other news media outlets, and her performances during the primary debates, which were carried on national and international networks, offer a fairly complete picture of Clinton's rhetoric during the primary campaign.

In generating an over-arching argument regarding Clinton's rhetorical strategies during her campaign, I contend that gendered stereotypes and expectations heavily informed Clinton's rhetorical situation during her bid for the presidential nomination. I also contend that Clinton's discourse, which did not respond to and even ignored the gendered elements of her rhetorical situation (though I am sure she was aware of them) did not adequately respond to the constraints that complicated her campaign and even exacerbated the situation through her rhetorical choices. Finally, I argue that it is only by investigating Clinton's unique rhetorical situation, and critiquing her rhetoric in relation to her gender, that a complete rhetorical criticism of Clinton's campaign can be achieved.

With this rationale as a backdrop, the literature review is designed to 1) characterize the various elements that comprised Hillary Clinton's rhetorical situation during the 2008 primary campaign, and 2) to draw attention to general research questions that guide this study. Chapter Two presents the research methodology that guides the analysis of Clinton's campaign rhetoric from the 2008 campaign and discusses the specific artifacts for the current study. Chapters Three through Five examine the aspects of Clinton's rhetorical situation (audiences, exigencies, and constraints). Finally, Chapter Six presents several critical conclusions, implications, and avenues for future research.

Review of Literature

Any study centered on answering the umbrella question of how the first viable major party female presidential candidate communicated during her campaign would be remiss if attention were not turned to the most obvious difference between her and her male adversaries. Additionally, because the current study seeks to understand Hillary Clinton's rhetorical situation during her campaign, attention must be paid to the substance of that situation. Thus, the review of literature explains, generally, why women lack representation at high levels of political leadership, and political efficacy in general. The focus on gender as a key issue in politics, and society in general, has been a vital site of study for decades, and has certainly been worthwhile. As Deborah Tannen, professor of linguistics at Georgetown University and a noted expert in gendered communication, has noted, "'A woman in the public eye is going to provoke hatred and anger from men' that is visceral'" (in Clift & Brazaitis, 2000, p. 45). But why is this the case? Are men and women, in functioning as voters, politicians, and leaders so different as to espouse hatred and prompt such an intense lack of representation? Within the realms of political communication and political science, we do know that men and women differ, at least

perceptually, in their campaign strategies (Bystrom, 2004). Research within the field has also noted that the campaign, specifically, is where women will often fall short in trying to sway voters to believe in their abilities as political communicators and leaders (Han, 2003). To explore this disparity, this review presents research on the following topics: (1) the “double bind” for political women; (2) gendered traits and expectations of male and female political communicators; (3) gendered issues of male and female political communicators; (4) gender and voting behavior in the United States; (5) media and gender in the political context; and (6) leadership and gender in the political, public sphere. As is argued later, each of these aspects of scholarship describes an over-arching rhetorical situation that Hillary Clinton had to address during her campaign for president.

The ‘Double Bind’ for Political Women

The physical and psychological context that is the public, political sphere creates a tangible double bind for women seeking political office, especially on a national level. Bower (2003) has reminded us, “the modern woman who wants to succeed in a leadership role is first required to demonstrate male and dominant behaviors as a manager, and then she is chastised for not being a lady. If she then attempts to modify her style to be more traditionally feminine, she finds she is not taken seriously...” (p. 110). As such, Bower (like several other authors in the field) has argued that women in politics must walk the thin line, with her use of rhetoric, “of evolution without creating the impact of revolution” (p. 115). Gelb and Palley (1982) have similarly argued that women must be perceived by voters as attempting to increase sex role equity rather than sex role change in order to not frighten voters.

In describing the potential first female president, Clift and Brazaitis (2000) noted, “Political analysts believe the first woman president will be a ‘Sister Mister,’ having the body of

a woman with the character traits of a man” (p. 18). Contrary to this idea, several scholars have noted that female politicians who balance both male and female characteristics are not only less apt to frighten voters, they are also more likely to succeed in politics. Bystrom, et al. (2004) found, “...when women candidates win, they emphasize masculine traits and both feminine and masculine issues most frequently, although more traditionally feminine than masculine issues” (p. 79). These same authors also found that “women candidates may be most successful... emphasizing mostly feminine or a balance of feminine and masculine image traits” (p. 109). Indeed, these sentiments are echoed in several studies that have indicated women must balance the positive leadership traits and issues associated with both male and female styles of leadership effectively in order to gain elective success in any capacity, especially the presidency (Bower, 2003; Bystrom, 2004; Rosenthal, 1998b; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993).

Several scholars have argued that this maintenance of both female and male leadership traits and issues can be accomplished rhetorically, through management of discourse that encourages substantive argument and discussion while allowing rhetors, both male and female, to embody elements that are reminiscent of female discourse (Bower, 2003; Buchanan, 1996; Bystrom, 2003a; Campbell, 1998; Dow & Tonn, 1993; Han, 2003). Dow and Tonn (1993) argued, “Female politicians must operate in the ultimate public deliberative context, where feminine communicative strategies would seem least valued and adaptation to typically male communicative patterns would seem the most useful” (p. 288). However, Han (2003) contended, in discussing how a woman might communicate as president, that both male and female politicians should strive to find a communication strategy that blends the best of both perspectives:

Can a woman president master the bully pulpit? ... Women view communication as

an opportunity for confirmation, support, and consensus...this difference has benefited women politicians in recent years. Television as a medium demands intimacy and the ability to express the private self, a skill that most presidents, with the exception of Reagan and Clinton, have had difficulty perfecting. Male politicians discuss goals, whereas, women politicians reveal themselves through an intimate, conversational, and narrative style of speech (p. 172-173).

Such a style, the “feminine style,” was first articulated by Campbell (1989) in her text analyzing early feminist speeches from the suffragist, temperance, and abolition movements. In a later text, Campbell (1998) more clearly articulated the utility and the tenets of this perspective in rhetorical terms. Campbell asserted, when describing the advent of this rhetorical device, that “women speakers were expected to reaffirm their womanliness discursively at the same time that they demonstrated the ordinary rhetorical competencies—cogent arguments, clarity of position, offering compelling evidence, and responding to competing views—that were gender-coded as masculine” (p. 4). Also in this text, Campbell presented the specific criteria that rhetors must utilize in order to enact the feminine style and thus, effectively negotiate the double bind:

In rhetorical terms, performing or enacting femininity has meant adopting a personal or self-disclosing tone (signifying nurturance, intimacy, and domesticity) and assuming a feminine persona, e.g. mother, or an un-gendered persona, e.g. mediator or prophet, while speaking. It has meant preferring anecdotal evidence (reflecting women’s experiential learning in contrast to men’s expertise), developing ideas inductively (so the audience thinks that it, not the presumptuous woman, drew the conclusions), and appropriating strategies associated with women—such as domestic metaphors, emotional appeals to motherhood, and the

like—and avoiding such “macho” strategies as tough language, confrontation or direct refutation, and any appearance of debating one’s opponents. Note, however, that feminine style does not preclude substantive depth and argumentative cogency (p. 5).

Several studies have used this notion of feminine style to analyze female politicians, including Hillary Clinton, acting in the public, political sphere, and have demonstrated that this style is effective for both men and women (Corrigan, 2000; Dow & Tonn, 1993; Durbriwny, 2005; Gardetto, 1997; Kelly, 2001; Parry-Giles, 2000; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002; Trent & Short-Thompson, 2003). Bystrom (2003a) found, in her analysis of communication strategies used by candidates between 1990 and 2002, “Both female and male candidates were equally as likely to use all of the elements of the ‘feminine style’”(p. 179). Campbell (1998) argued this was wise, given the prevalence of television as a means of transmitting political messages: “Television has played a significant role in changing public discursive performance of gender roles. The qualities that project most effectively on television are qualities culturally associated within women’s speech, which has made a personal, self-disclosing style based on narrative highly valued” (p. 4-5). Buchanan (1996) has also concurred with this contention, asserting that political leaders, especially women, must adhere to the social reality in which they reside while also challenging that reality by embracing new roles (like those in high political office, for women). In doing so, Buchanan asserted that the messages of female political leaders could gain persuasive power in their adherence to the “moral order of nature itself” (p. 27) (i.e. the sexual division of culture between the public and private spheres). Because it uses traditionally feminine means of persuasion, the feminine style provides in many ways the blending of styles urged by scholars, as previously articulated, and thus, can represent an appealing way for women seeking political

office to bypass the double bind and effectively communicate to voters. But was this the strategy used by Clinton in 2008? More generally, when considering the notion of the political woman's 'double bind,' two questions come to the fore with regard to Clinton's campaign: 1) In what ways did Clinton acknowledge the double bind for political women, and was this a site of rhetorical struggle for the candidate?, and 2) How was Clinton able to assuage the societal dictates that comprise the double bind through her use of campaign discourse?

Gendered Traits of Male and Female Political Communicators

The roots of the double binds Clinton (and indeed all who seek political office) faced, stem from our socio-cultural adherence to gendered traits. These traits form expectations for how men and women should conduct their personal and public lives, and as we shall see, are pervasive and binding. Much of this research, and indeed much of what we know about gender stereotypes, traits, and roles, is rooted in the landmark psychological research by Sandra Bem (1974). In introducing her influential Bem Sex-role Inventory, she asserted, "masculinity has been associated with an instrumental orientation, a cognitive focus on 'getting the job done'; and femininity has been associated with an expressive orientation, an affective concern for the welfare of others" (p. 156). In a later text, Bem (1993) argued, "American society constructs...conventionally gendered women and men by situating people in a culture whose discourses and social practices are organized around the lenses of androcentrism and gender polarization" (p. 143). Bem's research has been applauded by several scholars who agree that sex role delineation and the subsequent expectations based on a person's sex role determine the ways in which individuals communicate with and are perceived by others (Chodorow, 1978; Dubeck & Dunn, 2002; Ivy & Blacklund, 1994). The subsequent stream of research from myriad fields,

including communication studies, has focused in divergent ways on how notions of gender orientation are fostered, passed down throughout society and history, and become pervasive.

These gender roles become salient for politicians, especially women, as they reflect the stereotypes about how female and male politicians are supposed to act in the public, political sphere. These are the qualities, based on gender stereotypes, that men and women politicians are expected to adhere to or challenge (especially for women) so as to appear more viable as political candidates. These stereotypes are pervasive as they dictate, based on one's gender, "what is proper or expected from women and men...these...stereotypes [apply] to family, workplace, and social interactions [and] are often transmitted to the political world" (Dolan, 1998, p. 46). Studies in political communication have revealed that men and women will often emphasize these traits in different ways as they attempt to gain political office (Anderson & Sheeler, 2005; Blankenship & Robson, 1995; DeRosa & Bystrom, 1999; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). No stranger to politics, it is logical to assume that Clinton and her campaign staff were aware of these stereotypes and adapted their communicative strategies accordingly. Thus, in order to shed light on the specific elements of Clinton's rhetoric during her presidential campaign, it is necessary to be aware of these specific expectations in order to inform our understanding of her rhetorical techniques in her speeches and debate performances as they are dictated by the gender traits that dominate politics in our country.

Men in politics are expected to embody myriad characteristics so as to appear politically and socially acceptable. They are expected to be tough, strong, successful, aggressive, competent, experienced, knowledgeable, stern, autonomous, masculine, active, rational, self-confident, direct, and stress elements of past political successes (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bystrom, 2004; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 1998; Gilligan, 1993). All of these characteristics

have created a public sphere in which “men have more often been culturally imbued with a ‘take charge’ capacity” more in keeping with the expectations of a political leader (Duerst-Lahti, 2006, p. 25). Men, both voters and politicians, regardless of political party affiliation, are also perceived as being more conservative than women (Palmer & Simon, 1996). As politicians, studies have discovered that men are more likely to interrupt colleagues, especially when they are female, use longer speaking times, utilize more intimidating behavior, and embody a more power-oriented, authoritative model of leadership more so than their female counterparts (Rosenthal, 1998a; Rosenthal, 1998b).

Traits of women represent a cultural contrast to those of men in the political sphere. Women are expected to embody honesty, integrity, cooperation with others, sensitivity and understanding of others, a nurturing nature, emotional expressiveness, caring, helping, being involved, being responsible, warmth, a gentle nature, passivity, and dependence (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Buchanan, 1996; Bystrom, 2004; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 1998; Fox & Schuhmann, 1999; Gilligan, 1993; Han, 2003; Helgesen, 1995; Witt, et al., 1994). These characteristics “emphasize relationships with people” and “reveal a focus on the doing of various tasks rather than on the completion” (Helgesen, 1995, p. 28). Women are expected to act as ladies, even as they compete against men in politics, and are expected to “maintain some level of the traditional altruistic and apolitical above-it-all demeanor” (Witt, et al., 1994, p. 215). Women are also expected to be, or are at least perceived as being, more progressive and more liberal than their male counterparts, regardless of actual political party affiliation (Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 1998; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Epstein, et al., 1998; Palmer & Simon, 1996). This perception of liberalism can be problematic for women seeking elective office; Duerst-Lahti (2006) explained that this liberal label can often pigeon-hole women, lending them expertise in working

on social issues or “women’s” issues, but not on high-level, substantive issues that are deemed more “culturally important.” Studies have also shown that, to the detriment of female politicians, women in politics can also be perceived as “talkative, nagging, arguing without knowledge...and hyperemotional and overly concerned with trivia” (Beck, 2001, p. 57).

Many of these characteristics are ascribed to women to maintain the cultural expectations associated with “Republican Motherhood,” wherein women are expected to be more passive and remain in the private sphere rather than assuming more active roles in the public sphere of politics (Dow & Tonn, 1993; Rosenthal, 1998a). “True Womanhood,” another label for this social construction, “was first and foremost a moral definition of women. It defined morality as women’s nature...and by describing what women were like [it] prescribed what they should be like” (Buchanan, 1996, p. 37-38). Unfortunately, these strict social prescriptions have limited women’s access to the public sphere, and thus full political participation and representation, because they inherently “[deny] them a direct relationship with government,” a man’s domain (Buchanan, 1996, p. 18). As such, several scholars have noted that these cultural expectations prevent many women from taking part in the public sphere in running for political office, or at least serve as a cause for women to delay their entry into politics, leading to several barriers to full political participation (Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Witt, et al., 1994). Rosenthal (1998a) explained: “Women [in politics] are older, defer political careers until past their primary years of childrearing and family responsibilities, and hone their leadership ability in classrooms and community centers rather than in boardrooms and locker rooms” (p. 162). Because women have fewer years involved in politics and less access to the career achievement commensurate with traditional avenues of political success, they are less likely to be able to catch up with their male counterparts, or less likely to enter politics at all, leading to the under-representation of women at

all levels of government. Thus, based on our understanding of these specific attributes of male and female politicians, two specific questions regarding Clinton's campaign arise: 1) How did Clinton acknowledge these specific traits ascribed to women in running for the most masculine of male political positions (the presidency), and 2) How was Clinton's rhetoric tailored in order to combat the specific problems associated with these traits of "True Womanhood"?

Gendered Issues for Male and Female Political Communicators

Just as stereotyping has labeled certain traits as male and female, so to have specific political issues been ascribed gendered labels. As is discussed in later sections of this review, the assignment of gender to political issues is important to discuss and analyze as it not only affects what issues are discussed (or not) during campaigns, but it also has implications for how women and men discuss issues that are gendered in opposition to their own biological sex. As presidential campaigns are focused around particular issues, our attention to this literature greatly informs our interpretation of Clinton's rhetoric in the realms of her speeches and debate performances.

Generally, women's issues, or those issues that are more typically emphasized by women, thus making them "women's issues," include: education, health care, senior citizen issues, taxes, drug use, poverty, environmental protection, abortion, and reproductive rights (Banwart, et al., 2003a; Banwart, et al., 2003b; Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bystrom, 2003a; Bystrom, 2004; Davis, 2003; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Palmer & Simon, 1996). Men also use some of these issues, including taxes, though in different ways. Women may, for instance, stress the effects of tax policies on the welfare of individuals rather than simply addressing the policy implications. Health care, too, has also been a key issue for men, especially for Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, but these seem to be exceptions to the rule; on balance, the research has

indicated that women tend to use or stress these issues more than men in campaigning for elective office. Women are given more credibility to discuss and act on issues that are perceived as women-specific issues, or issues that affect women's roles in society, such as women's research, sexual harassment laws, family leave, childcare, and gun control (Niven & Zilber, 2001a). Issues more often associated with men, or "male issues," include: taxes and the economy, unemployment, immigration, crime, defense, agriculture, and international issues (Banwart, et al., 2003a; Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bystrom, 2003a; Bystrom, 2004; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Davis, 2003; Duerst-Lahti, 2006).

It is obvious from these lists that many of these issues, save taxes—which seems to serve as a universal issue for politicians—reflect the stereotypical roles associated with women as dictated by Republican Motherhood or the ideology of True Womanhood previously discussed. These issues, as they are dictated by the socio-cultural expectations of American society establish that women have credibility, because they are women, when they discuss or are involved politically with feminine issues. In contrast, men must focus their political communication on male issues, where they are perceived as more culturally credible, though research has indicated that men have greater flexibility (and success) with certain women's issues, such as education and health care. Still, it is clear that, to be politically successful, candidates for elective office must deal with myriad issues important to voters regardless of their gender. As such, several scholars have noted that candidates will often, in spite of cultural dictates, take a blended or adaptive approach to political issues, including issues from both lists in their campaign communication (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bystrom, 2003a; Bystrom, 2004). These conclusions seem reasonable, given the diverse range of issues that may erupt during a lengthy political campaign, especially a race for the presidency wherein conceivably

any issue is considered fair game for consideration. Where this information becomes salient for the current study is in considering the rhetorical handling of these issues by Clinton. As a woman running for the presidency, Clinton had to address wide-ranging issues, regardless of the culturally assigned gender assigned to these issues. Thus, it is necessary to analyze, in looking at Clinton's speeches and debate performances, the specific ways in which she presented and discussed these issues, both masculine and feminine, to see if the types of issues she addressed can aid in explaining the nature of Clinton's rhetoric.

Gender and Voting Behavior in the United States

The literature exploring research that has centered on issues of gender and voting behavior is important to consider for several reasons. First, voter perceptions, behaviors, and stereotypes are salient to the issue of Clinton's rhetorical situation and her resulting discourse. Without an understanding of what voters think about women in politics, and where voters are receiving information relevant to their voting decisions, any study related to women in politics would be incomplete. Additionally, as clarified in the following paragraphs, the statistics related to voting and information gathering helps explain why women remain underrepresented in politics in our society, and thus, adds to what we know about Clinton's rhetorical situation during her campaign. Finally, the relationship between politicians, especially women, and voters is salient to the present study. Dolan (1998) asserted, "...the crucial relationship is with the voters, with those people whose support or rejection makes or breaks a candidacy" (p. 41). Dolan went on to note that this relationship between politicians and voters is likely more important and more complex for women than for men. As such, attention to voters is necessary for understanding both the nature of the audience that comprised Clinton's rhetorical situation, as well as the tactics that Clinton used to reach such an audience.

Initially, and surprisingly to some, it is important to note that women in America vote more often and in greater numbers than men, especially in presidential elections since 1964 (Ford, 2002; Johnston & Schmermund, 2008), and women are also more likely to register to vote than men (Bystrom, 2004). This trend has most recently been demonstrated in the 2008 election when a record number of women voted in the presidential election (“Women’s vote clinches,” 2008). Additionally, Palmer and Simon (1996) noted that women are more likely than men to take part in other campaign activities, such as campaigning for candidates, indicating a higher interest level and positive feeling toward the elective process. This interest in politics, though later shown to not be significant between the sexes, has been confirmed by later research bolstering the conclusion that women are interested in politics (Banwart, 2007). Still, political interest aside, women voters have demonstrated a lack (at least perceptually) in political knowledge, do not utilize the same sources of political information as male counterparts, and do not feel predisposed to vote for female candidates for political office.

Several scholars have noted that women lack correct information related to politics, or at least perceive that they do, when compared to male voters. Delli Carpini and Kutter (1996) noted that lack of correct political information among women has remained constant over time, but also asserted that while men have a greater sense of correct political knowledge on national and state levels, women have more accurate information related to local political issues. A perceived lack of correct information was demonstrated in the 2000 election; Kenski and Jamieson (2001) noted that female respondents’ scores on two knowledge questionnaires lagged significantly behind male survey respondents’, and Banwart and Bystrom (2001) found that men reported a significantly stronger belief in how informed they were about political issues when compared to women. Similar trends were also discovered during the 2004 election cycle that indicated a

significant gender gap does exist in relation to correct political information (Dow, 2007). The split between awareness of local and state politics by women versus national politics by men has also been confirmed by Atkeson and Rapoport (2003) and Banwart (2007). Some recent scholarship has indicated that such studies regarding a lack of political knowledge among women are somewhat flawed; Mondack and Anderson (2004) have argued that such measures are unreliable, and that such a gap is likely due to flawed measurement techniques. Regardless of whether or not these measures are accurate, the predominant conclusion remains that women may perceive that they are less capable in answering questions about national and state level politics than men. This has led some in the field to contend that women, in general, believe that they are less likely to understand and influence politics and policy issues (Buchanan, 1996).

Research devoted to gender differences related to the acquisition of political information may aid in explaining the disparity in political knowledge. Kenski and Jamieson (2001) found that men are more likely than women to garner political information from traditional sources of political news, such as newspapers, news magazines, political radio talk shows, and the Internet. Dissimilarly, Banwart and Bystrom (2001) discovered that women were more likely to obtain political information from national morning television shows, such as *The Today Show*, local television news, and through conversations with others. In other words, men are more likely than women to utilize media sources that are more often strongly correlated with correct political information (Bystrom, 2003b). This lack of readership, in relation to politics, of newspapers over the years "...reflects the fact, according to experts, that the news nationally continues to be overwhelmingly (white) male in content and editorial perspective" (Buchanan, 1996, p. 19).

The effects of the different levels of political information and use of sources of political information are not fully known, but some scholars have strong arguments in relation to

perceptions of female political leaders. Lawless (2004) suggested that political party, more than gender, is telling about how voters, both men and women, will vote in elections. Still, Lawless has also asserted that women who are represented by women are more likely to be involved in politics and to offer positive evaluations of their female representatives in politics. Conversely, Clift and Brazaitis (2000), Dolan (2006), and Rosenthal (1998a) have argued that there is no gender affinity among female voters in relation to voting for female politicians. Still, Dolan (2008) (in a later study) did find that women respondents felt more positively toward female Democratic politicians, but that this gender affinity did not translate to female candidates who were Republican, suggesting that political party, more than gender, was indeed a greater indicator of voting behavior. This later study by Dolan also indicated that respondents, both men and women, had a greater amount of information about women candidates, regardless of party, but lacked a clear explanation for the greater level of knowledge.

What is clear from much of the research related to voter perceptions of gender is that voters are likely to utilize, regardless of their sources of political information, stereotypes about gender behaviors and expectations in evaluating both men and women politicians (Fox & Oxley, 2003; Fridkin & Kenny, 2009; Sanbonmatsu & Dolan, 2009; Taylor, et al., 2008; Witt, et al., 1994). As such, and because the vast majority of political leaders in the U.S. are male, voters measure the abilities of women in politics in relation to the male standards of leadership (Tolleson-Rinehart, 2001). Thus, and this is key for the present study, voters are unwilling to vote for women, especially for the presidency in the U.S., because they are perceived as less competent than male elected leaders (Fox & Oxley, 2003; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993). These two findings clarify a central rhetorical problem faced by the Clinton campaign in 2008: How

did Clinton negotiate the demands of voter expectations and assumptions based on her gender in order to convince voters she was capable of assuming the role of commander-in-chief?

Media and Gender in Politics

To fully understand the way women operate in politics, and more specifically, the potential rhetorical problems faced by the Clinton campaign in 2008, a discussion of news media coverage of women politicians and their use of other media outlets is necessary. The present study is not focused on a rhetorical analysis of the media coverage surrounding the campaign, but I would be vastly under-stating the influence of media if it were not presented as a major source of political information that contributes to the rhetorical situation and exigencies in a campaign. As Bystrom (2003a) has explained: "...the media may have an impact on the outcome of elections and, thus, upon how the nation is governed" (p. 175). Bystrom (2003b) further argued, "...the mass media are powerful and important sources of information in a political campaign, not necessarily because they influence voting behavior, but because they draw attention to the candidates and their campaigns" (p. 96). Duerst-Lahti (2006) agreed with the importance of news media sources, especially in terms of presidential elections: "The press serves as the great mentioner, without whose attention no candidate can be seen as viable...what the press assumes, and the way it frames its coverage...has consequences for what readers think about, and to a lesser extent, how they think about it" (p. 12-13). And while a significant body of research has been dedicated to the study of this area of gender and politics, several studies have contradictory findings. Still, several conclusions can be drawn in relation to media and gender that is explained in the following paragraphs that shed light not only on the pervasiveness of gender stereotyping, but also on the barriers to female political efficacy in our culture. Thus, both of these ideas have important implications for the current study of Clinton's 2008 campaign as

this research on gender and media is telling of how messages (and thus, stereotypes and gendered expectations) are disseminated to the public. In other words, the media messages about Clinton's rhetoric during her campaign are a useful guide for understanding the nature of her rhetorical constraints and, thus, also indicate the substance of what she must discuss in her speeches and debate performances.

Witt, et al. (1994) asserted, "...the press coverage of women in politics is an artifact of this country's age-old but unresolved debate over women citizen's proper roles versus 'proper women's' place" (p. 182). Several studies have documented the stereotyping and biased coverage that comprises the coverage of female politicians. Braden (1996) discovered that women "struggle to receive media coverage and legitimacy in the eyes of the media and, subsequently, the public" (p. 1). Scholars have also noted that journalists often will ask women politicians questions that they don't ask men, and discuss women in ways that reinforce cultural prescriptions emphasizing traditional womanhood (Braden, 1996; Bystrom, 2003a; Bystrom, 2003b; Carlin & Winfrey, 2009). Braden asserted, "journalists often hold women accountable for the actions of their children and their husbands, though they rarely hold men to the same standard" (1996, p. 1). Other scholars have found similar themes in news media coverage of female politicians; Banwart and her colleagues asserted, "news coverage across both primary and federal election races continue[s] to define female candidates in terms of their gender, children, and marital status" (2003a, p. 670), while Niven and Zilber (2001b) contended that female politicians and their staffs have perceived the media as being less fair in their treatment of female Congressional representatives. Carroll and Schreiber (1997) discovered in their analysis of media coverage of Congress that news media sources have continued to perpetuate stereotypes about women politicians, though in more subtle ways. These scholars discovered that news stories

often emphasize female politicians' associations with other women, with "female issues" such as abortion and women's health, and have focused on family issues faced by female politicians as well as their attire and appearance. Bystrom, et al. (2004) also argued the media has a "penchant to stereotype women with regard to mentioning their sex and marital status more often than they do for men" (p. 185). These same authors go on to note that since the media has often focused on the appearance and attire of female politicians and candidates, they have painted them as less serious politicians than men which can result in a distraction from their issues during campaigns. This perpetuation of stereotypes and gender prescriptions for female candidates can do much to cast doubt on a woman's abilities in elected office and can, thus, be incredibly detrimental to her elective success (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Han, 2003; Wood, 2003).

On the other hand, several scholars have also discovered that women are beginning to see more equitable coverage within the nation's press. Carroll and Schreiber (1997) found that in 1992, the so-called "Year of the Woman," women received more (in quantity, if not quality) coverage than their male counterparts. Smith (1997) concurred, and concluded that newspaper reporters and editors provided women more equal footing in their press coverage with regard to their campaigns for Congress. This type of equitable coverage seemingly continued during the 2000 and 2002 elections, wherein Bystrom and her colleagues discovered that press coverage in mixed-gender races was not only more equitable, it was also more "evenly balanced," thus voters "had quantifiably more, as well as more favorable, information about female candidates" (Bystrom, et al., 2004, p. 185). Even Bystrom (2003a), an ardent critic of media treatment of women in politics, has admitted: "while some stereotyping does exist, the playing field for female candidates is becoming more equal" (p. 173).

Still, the most recent studies, specifically those studies that have addressed the 2008 campaign cycle, have indicated that media outlets may be slipping back into old habits. In her analysis of both Clinton's and Palin's candidacies in 2008, Anne Kornblut (2009b), a reporter herself, acknowledged the sexism that was present in news media sources, and argued that news reporters often applied much more scrutiny and a lack of parity in their coverage of Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin. Vatz (2009) concurred with this assessment, and also argued that news media favored Obama over Clinton in overt, completely subjective ways. Perhaps most succinctly, Carlin and Winfrey (2009), in their analysis of sexism during the 2008 presidential campaign cycle, argued, "analysis of Senator Hillary Clinton's campaign for the Democrat nomination for president and Governor Sarah Palin's campaign for vice president reveals that media coverage incorporated gender stereotypes and gendered language that influenced the way both women were viewed" (p. 330). As such, while there may have been some moments of improvement in terms of media representation of female candidates, it is clear that media outlets, in general, have a tendency to use unequal and unfair means for discussing female politicians.

It is important to note that most of the strategies used by both women and men discussed previously are likely the result of societal stereotypes to offset or counter negative (or absent) news media coverage. Therein lies the specific relevance of the media's involvement in political campaigns for the study of Clinton's rhetoric. If the media serves as both a provider of important political information to voters, as well as a source of gender stereotypes, then it is logical to assume that in her quest to position herself as a viable presidential candidate, Clinton would adapt her speeches and debate performances as a response to this information. Thus, this discussion of the importance of media as they relate to female candidates becomes crucial, because media outlets served as a source of her direct rhetorical problem, or at least as a

constraining force necessitating rhetorical response by Clinton. In essence, I argue that the media coverage of her campaign highlighted her rhetorical exigency as a woman running for the most powerful political position in the nation (if not the world). The goal of her rhetoric, then, will reflect this desire to adapt to gendered expectations as she presented herself as a presidential leader.

But what constitutes effective leadership, and how can women fight against cultural gender biases to attain elective office when stereotypes are so prevalent? To answer this question, and to further develop the present study, the final section of this review focuses on dominant notions of leadership, and female leadership styles specifically, as they relate to gender and political communication.

Gender and Leadership in the Political, Public Sphere

Clift and Brazaitis (2000) summed up one of the more important elements of having women in the political, public sphere by noting, “Perhaps the most perverse obstacle to a woman becoming president is that no woman has ever been elected president. There is no one for girls growing up to emulate” (p. 25). Carroll (1985) argued similarly, charging that the lack of women in greater numbers in politics is caused largely by the fact that women do not have office-holding experience. Rhode (2003) agreed that this was still true, eighteen years after Carroll’s statement, and contended that the lack of mentors within politics for women is a key barrier to improved representation. The fact that women are still absent in the most public of spheres, politics, serves as an immediate and important reason why women remain underrepresented in high levels of government. Indeed, as Carroll (1985) asserted, this absence of women in key leadership roles is instrumental to the continuation of gendered expectations and stereotypes in our culture: “The dominance of politics by men has been viewed as a natural extension of the sexual division of

labor within the family” (p. 1). Without examples of women in political office, there is no counter-example to male leadership, inhibiting equality on a number of fronts, especially those regarding women’s issues and rights, but particularly in demonstrating that women can fill roles outside of the home (private sphere) (Norton, 2003; Rhode, 2003; Rosenthal, 1998b). This perpetuation of stereotypes, with all of the limitations to women’s empowerment that are implicit within such a power system, has been demonstrated to cause women in government to feel less welcomed, more easily sexually stereotyped, and feel that they face more tangible barriers to success in politics, which is especially troubling, considering that women in the United States make up more than half of the electorate (Rosenthal, 1998a).

Such is the problem that was faced by Clinton as she began her campaign in 2007. She had to persuade voters, who had no previous example of a female president in the United States, that she could successfully occupy the role. Because this dilemma was one of the most fundamental sites of Clinton’s rhetorical problem during her campaign, attention to specific characteristics of male and female leadership is warranted.

A lack of examples is only one explanation why women lack viability in leadership roles; the cause can also be internal. Palmer and Simon (1996) argued that because women are still charged with maintaining their private sphere roles of mother and wife, most women “do not appear to be conscious of the fact that their skills and backgrounds make them qualified to run for office themselves” (p. 196). It is through this division of labor (with men in the public sphere of politics and women in the private, domestic sphere of the home) that most women, even those who have experienced political success, have exercised their influence (Rhode, 2003). However, exercising power through men still entrenches the notion of male leadership that dominates our culture, a key criticism from feminists who tend to define leadership in American society as

having a clear, though unstated, masculine bias (Rosenthal, 1998a). This explains why, whenever there is a woman who breaks barriers in the political sphere, she can set a positive example for many other women, which has been described as key to prompt other women to run for elective office (Tolleson-Rinehart, 2001; Witt, et al., 1994). As Skidmore (2003) noted, “It seemed that Ferraro’s candidacy [in 1984 for Vice President] had shattered a taboo. Many women came to believe that perhaps at last a woman could be president” (p. 26). But, as history has shown us more than twenty-five years later, only Sarah Palin has been on a major party ticket for the presidency or the vice presidency (on the McCain ticket in 2008), and she failed. As such, further examination of the barriers that impede women’s success in the public, political sphere is necessary before discussing the elements of both men’s and women’s leadership styles.

As previously indicated, societal stereotypes serve as a tangible barrier to women in leadership roles. Women are traditionally conceived as having specific expertise as wives and mothers that place them solely in the domestic sphere as the primary caretakers of children, causing some to believe that women are “emotionally unsuited for politics” (Carroll, 1985, p. 4). As Witt, et al. (1994) observed, “Her womanly-wifely-motherly attributes are a woman’s traditional source of authority and the core of her self esteem, yet these very important parts of her do not seem to have merit in the eyes of others” (p. 83). Furthermore, Bower (2003) contended, “For women to enter the public domain in either the business or political arenas, they must deal with the stereotypical expectations both of men who reside in the public domain and the women who do not choose to challenge the stereotypes” (p. 108). As such, the belief that women should remain in the domestic sphere has caused women to delay political careers till later in life until their children have left home or until their children are more capable of taking

care of themselves (Beck, 2001; Han, 2003; Norris & Inglehart, 1998; Rhode, 2003; Taylor, et al., 2008; Witt, et al., 1994).

This relationship between gender stereotyping and women's ability to serve as effective leaders was highlighted by Gilligan (1993) in her landmark work on the psychology of women's development. She contended:

For boys and men, separation and individuation are critically tied to gender identity since separation from the mother is essential for the development of masculinity. For girls and women, issues of femininity or feminine identity do not depend on the achievement of separation from the mother or on the progress of individuation. Since masculinity is defined through separation while femininity is defined through attachment, male gender identity is threatened by intimacy while female gender identity is threatened by separation. Thus, males tend to have difficulty with relationships, while females tend to have problems with individuation (Gilligan, 1993, p. 8).

And even when women have dared to enter the political, public sphere in independent leadership roles, they have been met with hostility as they have been judged by many as violating the belief that women's proper place was in the home (Dolan, 1998). Such stereotypes have not only inhibited support for women in leadership roles but, again, have also served to convince women that they should not seek political leadership roles in the first place (Palmer & Simon, 1996; Rhode, 2003; Taylor, et al., 2008).

Another explicit barrier to women gaining successful leadership roles in the political, public sphere has been incumbency. Several studies of women's leadership and gender and politics in general have demonstrated that incumbents in political races are incredibly difficult to

unseat, especially for seats in Congress on the national level. Thus, because men have held most of these seats, women have had a difficult time entering the political sphere (Carroll, 1985; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 1998). Palmer and Simon (1996) described this phenomenon succinctly: "...the growth of careerism occurred just as women were entering the national political arena. And by the time social attitudes about the role of women began to change in the 1970s, the power of incumbency was well established. The political glass ceiling was firmly in place" (p. 21-22). These scholars went on to discuss this issue in depth, and noted that incumbents have franking privileges (the ability to contact their constituencies to stress their accomplishments, and thus why voters should keep them in office, free of charge in carrying out their duties as elected representatives), name recognition, and greater press coverage, which explains why incumbents (men) have won more than their challengers. If they have never held office, women have found it very difficult to persuade party officials that they are not only qualified, but can also assume the incredible burden of raising the funds necessary to win a competitive race against an incumbent, which again serves to explain why female, non-incumbents have found it difficult, if not impossible, to break into the public sphere of politics (Witt, et al., 1994).

The available scholarship related to women as political leaders has also demonstrated that women simply have distaste for the political realm (Beck, 2001; Witt, et al., 1994). In a study of women leaders on the municipal level, Beck (2001) found that this dislike of the political sphere often led to a dissatisfaction of political leadership, once the role was achieved, and also led to some women not seeking re-election. The author summed up this dissatisfaction succinctly:

...once in office, many of them find politics distasteful. Half the women interviewed said the thing they liked least about being in office was the politics,

the ‘Backstabbing’...of politics was appalling to some of them because they had a cooperative view of how councils should work...‘Not working together’ was the hardest thing about politics, and some even mentioned that it would propel them out of the political arena (Beck, 2001, p. 61-62).

These studies have also demonstrated that women have been inhibited, once in political leadership positions, by implicit and explicit acts of sex discrimination. As such, once women have found the courage to run for political office, and if they were able to win, they have been somewhat less likely to remain in office (though not necessarily at the national level), or at least experienced a decreased sense of job satisfaction and a greater sense of inhibition when compared to their male counterparts.

A final barrier to women attaining leadership positions can be an unlikely source: women voters or those women already in leadership positions. Witt, et al. (1994) noted that both men and women can feel unsexed by powerful women. As such, female voters who are unwilling to challenge powerful prescriptions about gender expectations and behaviors may be unwilling to be supportive of women who “buck the system” and seek leadership positions. Additionally, when women have chosen to support other women, research has indicated that it was often not as tangible support as that available to men. Clift and Brazaitis (2000) have contended that women candidates for elected office have relied far more than their male counterparts on donations from women. Unfortunately, as a study by the National Women’s Political Caucus revealed, women have typically written checks for campaign donations for \$100 or less; whereas men have usually contributed \$500 or more (in Clift & Brazaitis, 2000). This trend may be changing, as evidenced by the vast amount of money in small donations that Barack Obama garnered from online

support in 2008 (Vargas, 2008). However, the research has predominantly indicated that women are at a financial disadvantage by comparison to their male opponents.

Women already in elected office also may serve as a barrier to other women seeking leadership positions. Rhode (2003) asserted:

Men are, of course, not the only group responsible for patterns of exclusion.

Recent research chronicles lingering difficulties with what sociologists once labeled ‘Queen Bees’: women who believe that they managed without special help, so why can’t everyone else? These women enjoy the special status that comes with being one of the few females at the top of the pecking order and are willing to serve as proof that gender is no barrier to those who are qualified (p. 13-14).

And while this type of woman leader may not reflect the dominant attitude of women who are in power, this ideology, given the dramatic lack of representation of women in politics, can serve to hinder societal change and increased representation (and the needed availability of mentors) necessary for true equality in the political sphere.

With an examination of the dominant barriers to female leadership in mind, it is important to next discuss the qualities or characteristics that embody both conventional leadership as well as newer conceptions of female leadership. Initially, Rhode (2003) has aptly pointed out that though the notion of leadership has been studied for centuries, and programs dedicated to creating leaders at countless universities are more and more common, very little is actually known about the actual traits of effective leadership. Still, one thing that is clear about predominant notions of leadership is that it is a role seemingly reserved for men. This is unsurprising because, as Buchanan (1996) has asserted, our societal notions of strong leadership

have been closely tied to the public sphere, and thus, are based “on the norm of male participation” (p. 19). Rosenthal (1998a) agreed, and contended, “Instead of being gender neutral, leadership is inherently masculinist” (p. 22). Male leadership has been described as involving the delegation of responsibilities instead of acting alone or in direct conjunction with others, and the speech of male leaders has often been said to use a “command” structure associated with stereotypical notions of male executive leadership (Tolleson & Rinehart, 2001). Male leaders are still expected to act as individuals, but are also expected to command others in a hierarchical structure, commensurate with their social status as men (Gilligan, 1993). Leaders, in a male-dominated system, are also supposed to espouse characteristics such as competence and integrity, typically defined in terms of past leadership performances (Bower, 2003). Leaders in politics need to be able to take on traditionally male acts, such as raising money, speaking in public, shaking hands with voters, distributing leaflets, and soliciting votes, activities that Witt, et al. (1994) have labeled as inherently male, culturally. Male leadership has also been seen as more instrumental in dealing with the issues important to a society like the United States. “Policy areas in which males are typically perceived as more skillful, such as military or economics, are regarded as more important for higher levels and types of office” (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993, p. 504-505). Research has also indicated that this type of masculinist political climate has been responsible for certain less-than-desirable traits in male leaders, such as a penchant for “credit claiming” and blaming others for failures (Fridkin & Woodall, 1998).

The presidency is also incredibly slanted toward male styles and characteristics of leadership. Han (2003) argued that the presidency as an office, and in campaigning for this office, has been characterized as male, describing a necessary ingredient of attaining and holding this office as “presidential machismo” (p. 169). Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) found the

characteristics that voters associated with the desirable presidential candidate are inherently male; these candidates have to be tough, assertive, and concerned with issues more strongly tied to men than women, such as the economy and defense. Bystrom (2003b) echoed this assertion in her research, and noted, “the majority of voters associated men, rather than women, with the top image characteristics they desire in a president—leading the nation during a crisis—and were more likely to believe that men would do a better job in making difficult decisions, the second-rated trait” (p. 100). Duerst-Lahti (2006) offered one explanation for the masculinization of the presidency: “Masculinity has been embedded through the traditions that dominate the presidency, but inside those traditions lie more implicit assumptions that make the presidential elections masculine space: the test of executive toughness, a preference for military heroes, the sports and war metaphors of debates, and more” (p. 22). Thus, since women not only face social barriers in appearing masculine, but also the tangible barriers described above (they cannot play certain prized sports, like football or baseball, and only recently have they been able to take combat roles in the military, etc.), a woman attaining the presidency is almost a socio-cultural impossibility.

Recently, in the study of leadership generally, there has been an inclusion of looking at the traits of women leaders. And while these studies are limited both in their number and scope, they reveal the styles women have used in leadership roles, their goals as leaders, and the potential benefits women leaders may offer. Women have tended to enter politics at the local levels of government (school boards, city councils, etc.), and as such, much of the research about women’s leadership has been conducted outside of the executive levels of government (Witt, et al., 1994). Rosenthal (1998b) studied gender differences between male and female committee chairs in state legislatures and discovered that while differences are present, men and women in

these roles shared more similarities in how they conducted their duties as leaders. Rosenthal also discovered that, contrary to dominant thought, female legislative committee chairs have tended to have just as much task orientation as interpersonal orientation. Other scholars have produced similar findings, noting that female legislators were just as likely to engage in issue specialization as their male colleagues, although they did report spending more time on the job than their male counterparts, and in dealing with the problems of their constituents (Epstein, et al., 1998). This same study also indicated that women were much more adept at and likely to work across party lines than their male colleagues, signifying, perhaps, a stronger ability in leadership roles as compared to men. This ability to work across party lines in forming broad-based coalitions, especially geared toward solving problems specific to women, was also demonstrated by Gelb & Palley (1982) and Han (2003). Palmer and Simon (1996), who studied women in Congress, found that male and female representatives have made many of the same strategic decisions and have similar career goals. Another study evaluating differences among male and female mayors of major cities has also indicated that female leaders were just as intelligent and just as apt to point out their city's major problems as males, but differed in emphasizing a more hands-on approach to leadership and teamwork (Tolleson-Rinehart, 2001). This style is in keeping with traditional notions of femininity; as Gilligan (1993) asserted, women often are driven to "maintain relational order and connection" (p. xiv).

This attention to the relational aspects of government and working across ideological lines has prompted some to argue that feminine leadership is more closely related to legislative rather than executive leadership (Tolleson-Rinehart, 2001). This is true, even when women are in more executive leadership positions, such as city managers; Fox and Schuhmann (1999) discovered in their study of male and female city managers that female managers were more

likely to have seen themselves as facilitators rather than “policy entrepreneurs,” and that they have been more likely to incorporate the views of citizens than their male counterparts. Han (2003) agreed, and described the typical characteristics of women leaders as inclusive of “consensus decision making, viewing power as something to be shared, encouraging productive approaches to conflict, building supportive working environments, and promoting diversity in the workplace” (p. 170). Such characteristics of female leadership prompted Rosenthal (1998a) to label a woman’s style of leadership as “integrative leadership,” which she described as “a style that emphasizes mutuality and shared problem solving and collaborative win-win strategies” (p. 19), a style Rosenthal has contended contradicts conventional notions of leadership that are male in orientation. Several scholars have noted that this style can be advantageous for women in high elected office. Han (2003) argued that the willingness to work across party lines and share power would greatly aid a woman who wins the presidency, as it will enable her to work effectively with Congress. Helgesen (1995) argued that women’s style of leadership may benefit us all, on a societal level, because women have tended to approach solving problems using a “big picture” approach, necessitating the consideration of larger effects of policy decisions before adoption.

One idea that has resonated among scholars studying leadership, in addressing women who might seek executive office, such as the presidency, is the notion that women, to be successful in these male-dominated offices, must blend their leadership styles. Fridkin and Woodall (1998) argued, “...women candidates [must] stress their possession of stereotypical ‘male’ traits, and male candidates [need to] emphasize their possession of stereotypical ‘female’ traits (p. 87). Han (2003) argued that this use of gender-adaptive strategies has been necessary: “Although party affiliation and policy preferences are still important factors among voters, the decline of partisan loyalty and the desire for party nominees to appeal to moderate, middle-of-

the-road voters during the general election has placed more emphasis on the candidate as an individual” (p. 166). As such, being able to appeal to these voters as a person, for both men and women, has required that candidates build credibility in all kinds of areas and present images accessible to all sorts of voters, regardless of gender. Bower (2003) echoed this mentality in assessing the possibility of a female president in the U.S.: “...for women to fully enjoy the possibilities of the public domain, they must be able to demonstrate their ability with masculine personality traits, since the male stereotypical traits dominate in most public venues” (p. 108). This sentiment is shared by several scholars and is particularly true for women running for the presidency, or any high-ranking national office, in a climate where national security and terrorism have dominated the political choices of American voters (Davis, 2003; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Rosenthal, 1998a; Rosenthal, 1998b; Wood, 2003). How women accomplish this task is still being debated across the nation and the discipline, but the scholarship presented in this chapter regarding leadership indicates that a woman pursuing the presidency will need to present a blended view of leadership—one that accentuates the possession of male leadership traits commensurate with the office of the presidency, while also demonstrating the positive aspects of women’s leadership. How Clinton addressed this predicament through her rhetoric, therefore, will be an important question to ask in dissecting how she constituted leadership through her discourse, and how she responded to the socio-cultural expectations of male leadership associated with the presidency.

The literature in the preceding pages described the backdrop or foundation of the rhetorical situation facing Hillary Clinton in the 2008 Democratic primary. Truly, it is clear that women who seek elective office in the public, political sphere have faced countless double binds, gendered assumptions and expectations as they seek to challenge and bypass their conventionally

constructed station. But to begin an analysis of the specific structure of Clinton's unique situation, the methodology guiding this study is presented in Chapter Two.

Chapter Two: Methodology

The review of literature clearly suggests that our understanding of female political discourse and leadership has been, and continues to be, firmly grounded in gendered stereotypes. Despite both female and male politicians adapting their communication techniques to overcome gendered expectations in order to successfully navigate the dynamic challenges associated with attaining and holding office in the public, political sphere, gendered stereotypes are omnipresent when it comes to politics. Thus, it is clear that gendered stereotypes create their own rhetorical situation that politicians, especially women, as they defy the traditional mold of the conventional political actor, must respond to in order to gain elective success. It is this understanding that guides the methodological approach used in this study in describing and critiquing the rhetoric of Hillary Rodham Clinton as she sought the Democratic nomination for president.

Specifically, the literature presented in Chapter One poses several questions that this study of Clinton's rhetoric explicates. First, how did Clinton's rhetoric both acknowledge and seek to bypass the double binds experienced by political women? Second, how did Clinton's rhetoric both acknowledge the male/female trait expectations of voters, while combating the constraints these gendered traits entailed? Third, how did Clinton address both traditionally masculine and feminine issues in her campaign speeches and debate performances? Fourth, how did Clinton's rhetoric respond to the gendered expectations and assumptions of voters in convincing them that she could be president? Fifth, in what ways did Clinton's rhetoric respond to the media coverage of her campaign? Sixth and finally, in what ways did Clinton's campaign rhetoric present her as a leader in order to present a positively feminine or blended approach to political leadership?

To answer these questions and to both define and evaluate Hillary Rodham Clinton's communicative behaviors during her quest for the presidency, I conduct a rhetorical criticism of Clinton's key campaign speeches and debate performances. The procedure for conducting this criticism is guided by two perspectives: Bitzer's (1968) "rhetorical situation" and Campbell's (1972) methodology for conducting 'organic' rhetorical criticism. To foster a greater understanding of the methods required by these two perspectives, and in order to create a concrete rationale for choosing these methods, I look to each of these author's texts separately, beginning with Bitzer.

Bitzer (1968) maintained, "it is the situation which calls the discourse [rhetoric] into existence" (p. 2). In other words rhetors do not create speeches out of thin air, with no substantive cause for the creation of rhetoric; there must be some catalyst that mandates a specific response from a speaker. Thus, in Bitzer's view, "...a work of rhetoric *is* pragmatic; it comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself; it functions ultimately to produce action or change in the world; it performs some task" (p. 3). The task that is suggested by rhetoric is determined, or in Bitzer's terminology, *constrained* by the situation—the specific psychological and physical contexts wherein people find themselves. Bitzer argued, "The situation dictates the sorts of observations to be made; it dictates the significant physical and verbal responses... it constrains the words which are uttered in the same sense that it constrains the physical acts" (p. 5).

Bitzer (1968), in defining the rhetorical situation, singled out three key elements that composed his perspective: "[The] rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed in discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision

or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence” (p. 6). Thus, according to Bitzer’s vantage point, the three elements central to the rhetorical situation are the *exigence*, *audience*, and *constraints*. The exigence is “an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be” (p. 6). The audience is also central in that “rhetoric always requires an audience...” (p. 7). Bitzer is clear, though, in adding that an audience “must be distinguished from a body of mere hearers or readers; properly speaking, a rhetorical audience consists only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change” (p. 7-8). Finally, a rhetorical situation has various constraints “made up of persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence” (p. 8). Bitzer goes on to further define and clarify potential constraints in the rhetorical situation as including “beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives, and the like” (p. 8).

In returning to the goal of this study, Bitzer’s vantage point is helpful for understanding the rhetoric of a political campaign. On a basic, general level, the exigence for politicians running for office involves the problem of getting voters (the audience) to vote for them. This problem may be more of an issue for one politician over another, based on her or his particular background, experience, platform, etc., but the fundamental exigence remains the same. Multiples specific exigencies may also erupt during a political campaign, reflecting topics that emerge that concern voters (i.e. war, economic decline, social issues, etc.). The audience during a political campaign is of course voters—those receiving (demanding, in Bitzer’s view) rhetorical activities of politicians who are courting their votes. And the constraints are the various factors encountered before and during a campaign that may complicate the candidate’s

rhetorical activities. If one considers Hillary Clinton's failed candidacy in 2008, Bitzer's rhetorical situation becomes even more appropriate. As evidenced in the literature that has evaluated Clinton's time as First Lady and during her Senate campaign in 2000, Clinton had a large amount of rhetorical "baggage" that could potentially have marred her bid for the presidency: she was deemed politically divisive, she was publicly decried for her overbearing and unfeminine personality, and was both lauded and reproached for her communicative style. Thus, Hillary Clinton arguably had an uphill battle to be won in order to secure her nomination. All of the information that has come to the foreground in the almost two decades since Bill Clinton began his first campaign for president, the background information surrounding Hillary Clinton's candidacy, its historic value, combined with the problem of the double binds for political women, and inherent barriers facing any woman's political ambitions, creates a rare point in history. Bitzer's rhetorical situation allows us to understand not only the constraining nature of Clinton's unique context, but also the ways in which Clinton attempted to overcome these constraints through her campaign communication.

Bitzer's rhetorical situation serves as the guiding lens that drives this study, but a specific procedure is also needed to go about defining and critiquing Clinton's rhetoric. To that end I turn to Campbell's (1972) notion of conducting organic rhetorical criticism to more fully describe the process used in this study. Campbell, like Bitzer, has argued that rhetoric "refers to persuasive discourses...that alter attitudes and actions" (p. 2). She also, like Bitzer, has argued that situational factors foster rhetoric and thus, must be central to the criticism of any rhetorical act: "Rhetoric rises out of conflict—within an individual, between individuals, or between groups. The basic conflict involves the perception of a problem—a gap between existing conditions and desired changes, or between current policies and practices and proposed goals" (p. 9). Thus, for

Campbell, critics must address the problems (exigencies) that give rise to rhetorical action in order to understand and more fully critique the success or failure of the rhetorical response to the problem. To accomplish such a criticism, Campbell asserted, “The critical approach [she uses in her text] rests on a strong personal commitment to organic or situational criticism in contrast to formularity or prescriptive criticism” (p. 13). In other words, Campbell contended that critics using her approach should avoid strict rhetorical schemas at the genesis stage of rhetorical criticism and ought to, instead, study the specific situation(s), rhetors, audiences, acts, etc. to foster a more genuine criticism that springs forth from the rhetorical situation itself. Such a methodology for conducting rhetorical criticism is in line with the goals of clearly defining and evaluating the rhetoric as created and constrained within the rhetorical situation. Campbell stated: “The organic approach to criticism is concerned with the specific goals of particular persuaders in specific contexts; it views rhetorical acts as patterns of argument and interaction that grow out of particular conditions. In such an approach the critic applies critical categories that grow out of the nature of the discourse, and [she or he] adapts the critical system to reveal and respond to the peculiarities of the discourse” (p. 14).

Campbell’s (1972) organic approach to rhetorical criticism has three stages—stages that will guide this analysis of Clinton’s rhetoric. The first stage of the analysis is descriptive in nature, focusing solely on the intrinsic nature of Clinton’s rhetoric; specifically, how Clinton, through her use of rhetoric, “[determined] the role the speaker or writer has chosen to play, the ways [she] perceives and selects [her] audience, and [her] choice of persuasive strategies” (p. 14). This first stage of analysis highlights the tone, purpose, structure, and strategies used by Clinton. During the second stage of organic criticism, the critic “examines the extrinsic elements of discourse” by looking to the historical-cultural context (e.g. rhetorical situation) the rhetor

operates within by looking to secondary sources of information (newspapers, magazine articles, interviews of relevant actors, etc.) in order to determine the extent to which the rhetoric studied responded to the rhetorical problems effectively or not. Finally, the third stage of organic criticism calls for the critic to pull both of the previous stages together in order to determine the patterns of behavior that are found in the discourse studied in relation to the historical-cultural context. Campbell noted, “in the third stage of critical analysis the critic selects or creates a system of criticism and determines the criteria for interpreting, evaluating, and making [her or his] final judgments on the rhetoric” (p. 21). It should be noted that this methodology does not suggest three separate parts or chapters that make up the analysis; rather, “in the final criticism each process is integrated into a coherently developed structure” (p. 13). Thus, the analysis portion of this study is comprised of separate chapters reflecting the three primary components of the rhetorical situation and Clinton’s response to this system of constraints in terms of her primary campaign communication (excerpts from her speeches and debate performances).

Thus, in combining the two approaches to rhetoric—Bitzer’s rhetorical situation and Campbell’s method of organic criticism—I use close textual analysis, looking to several of Clinton’s campaign speeches and debate performances, in addition to various major newspaper and news periodical sources, to paint the over-arching picture that defined Clinton’s presidential primary rhetoric in terms of gender. Scholarly sources that have examined various aspects of Clinton’s primary campaign are utilized when appropriate to shed light on Clinton’s response to her rhetorical situation. As Burghardt (2005) has made clear, “close textual analysis studies the relationship between the inner workings of public discourse and its historical context in order to discover what makes a particular text function persuasively...In practical terms, close textual analysis aims to reveal and explicate the precise, often hidden, mechanisms that give a particular

text artistic unity and rhetorical effect” (p. 563). I contend that these often hidden mechanisms reveal the depth of Clinton’s gendered rhetorical situation, and indeed, I argue that gendered expectations and conventions were omnipresent during the campaign and mandated particular responses by Clinton through her rhetoric. In sum, close textual analysis is used to organically re-create and evaluate Clinton’s use of rhetoric when posed with various rhetorical contexts in terms of gender.

Before the artifacts for study are presented, the next section of this chapter presents information necessary to understand the nature of the 2008 Democratic Presidential Primary campaign generally to foster an understanding of Clinton’s specific role therein as she sought the nomination.

The 2008 Democratic Presidential Nominating Race

The Democratic primary campaign in 2008 spanned almost eighteen months. As such, some context is necessary for understanding not only the broader rhetorical situation Clinton found herself in during the campaign, but also to provide specific context to some of the decisions made and strategies employed by the candidates. To that end, this section lays out the salient Democratic National Committee (DNC) rules for the 2008 primaries, caucuses, and debates as well as a timeline of events during the race that includes the relevant information necessary for fully understanding Clinton’s campaign.

First, the Democratic Party had specific rules for holding and participating in primaries and caucuses in order to nominate a single candidate at the national convention in Denver, Colorado. In 2008, the successful Democratic nominee for president needed to capture a simple majority of the more than 4,000 delegate votes. “State primaries and caucuses select pledged delegates, who are obligated to vote for the candidate their state chose. Additional unpledged

delegates—consisting mostly of party leaders and elected officials—are free to vote for any candidate” (“Primary Calendar: Democratic,” 2010, para. 1). The vast majority of convention delegates were from the first group of voters, though the second group—the so-called “super delegates”—also represented a significant nineteen percent of convention voters. As such, and as the analysis demonstrates clearly, all candidates who sought the Democratic nomination routinely courted both types of delegates (“Democratic Super Delegates,” 2010) during the campaign.

To secure these delegates at the convention, the candidates campaigned to win the primaries and caucuses within each individual state, and thus, a proportion of pledged delegates at the convention. According to the DNC’s rules in 2008, the delegates of each state were compelled to vote proportionally at the convention based on the number of voters who supported a particular candidate during these primaries and caucuses (“More primaries,” 2008). In other words in 2008, the DNC did not employ a “winner-takes-all” system. Indeed, while both Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton earned over 17 million votes among all of the individual contests, Obama garnered more delegate votes based on where he won by large percentages, especially in a collection of caucus states where Clinton had little or no organization such as Iowa, Kansas, and Washington. This resulted in 1,763 pledged delegates and 438 super delegates for Obama versus Clinton’s 1,640 pledged delegates and 256 super delegates (“Election Center 2008: Results,” 2008).

In 2008, the Democratic pledged delegates were awarded based on the results of individual state and territory primary elections and caucuses. The rules for such contests varied by state, and one state, Texas, chose in 2008 to hold both a primary election and caucuses. These primary elections functioned in much the same way as general elections—voters cast their secret

ballot for a particular candidate—while the caucuses were quite different, as Longley (2010) explained:

Caucuses are simply meetings, open to all registered voters of the party, at which delegates to the party's national convention are selected. When the caucus begins, the voters in attendance divide themselves into groups according to the candidate they support. The undecided voters congregate into their own groups and prepare to be 'courted' by supporters of other candidates. Voters in each group are then invited to give speeches supporting their candidate and trying to persuade others to join their group. At the end of the caucus, party organizers count the voters in each candidate's group and calculate how many delegates to the county convention each candidate has won (para. 6-7).

Thus, in order to win the nomination, candidates had to not only persuade registered citizens to vote for them in primary elections, in caucus states they also needed to persuade surrogates to speak on their behalf effectively in order to secure undecided voters.

Another rules-based issue that occurred during the 2008 Democratic primary season involved the states of Florida and Michigan—two delegate-rich states that many believed Clinton would carry. The DNC had ruled in 2007 that no states except Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina could host primaries before February 5, 2008. In spite of this edict, Michigan held their primary on January 15, 2008 and the Florida primary took place on January 29, 2008. Once these states had scheduled their primaries before the February 5 date, the DNC mandated that the presidential nominees could not actively campaign in either state before their primaries. After the primaries in these states were held (Clinton won both of them just ahead of Obama), the DNC ruled that the delegates from each of these states would not be seated at the national

convention, and thus, the pledged delegates won would not count to the overall total for any candidate because of the rules violations (“Timeline: 2008,” 2008). It was later decided on May 31, 2008 that the delegates from these states would be seated at the summer convention, but with only half-votes. And because Obama had placed second in each of these states, the compromise decided on by the DNC helped to push Obama over the necessary delegate total to secure the nomination.

Additionally, because this study focuses not only on Clinton’s key speeches but also some of her key debate performances during the campaign, a brief explanation regarding the rules for these events is also useful. During the 2008 primary cycle, there were twenty-six debates that involved Democratic candidates. Each of these debates were held by various sponsors, including news organizations, state and local Democratic Party chapters, and universities or colleges. Each debate also featured its own set of rules (i.e. some allowed opening and closing statements while others did not, some had strict time limitations in which candidates could respond to questions while others were less formal, etc.) and the debates were sometimes centered around specific themes (i.e. foreign policy, domestic policy, specific issues like the War on Terror or the economy, etc.). Each of the debates also maintained guidelines for including or not including certain candidates running for the nomination; these guidelines varied by each debate, but common factors used to determine who could or could not participate included: the amount of money raised by the candidate, the presence of staff or offices in the states where the debates took place, the sufficiency of polling numbers at the time of the debate, and, once the contests began, the amount of delegates won by the candidate.

Finally, because the campaign was incredibly lengthy, I have included in this section a timeline of major events during the race to foster a greater sense of clarity in the analysis

chapters. While it does not include every possible event during the campaign, it does include the salient national and international events, caucus and primary dates (as well as the Democratic winners in each contest), and all of the dates of the key speeches and debates analyzed in this study. The information that follows was compiled primarily from the website of Johns Hopkins University's Department of Governmental Studies ("Timeline: 2008 Primary, 2008) and is supplemented by the *CNN* Election Center ("Results: Democrats," 2008) and www.youdecidepolitics.com ("Full 2008 Democratic," 2007). The timeline is as follows:

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|-------------------|--|
| April 17, 2006 | Mike Gravel, former senator from Alaska announces his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for president—the first candidate among both Democrats and Republicans to do so. |
| November 5, 2006 | Saddam Hussein is found guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced to death by an Iraqi tribunal. |
| November 7, 2006 | In the US midterm elections, the Democrats take control of both the House and Senate, with 230 seats and 51 seats respectively. |
| November 30, 2006 | Tom Vilsack, former governor of Iowa, announces his candidacy for the Democratic nomination. |
| December 12, 2006 | Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich announces his candidacy for the Democratic nomination. |
| December 28, 2006 | Former North Carolina Senator and 2004 Vice Presidential nominee John Edwards announces his candidacy for the Democratic nomination. |
| January 10, 2007 | Republican President George W. Bush announces a new strategy for the war in Iraq, dubbed a "surge." The number of troops to be sent is set at 21,500. |

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| January 11, 2007 | Connecticut Senator Chris Dodd announces his candidacy for the Democratic nomination. |
| January 20, 2007 | New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton announces her candidacy for president via a video address on her campaign website. |
| January 21, 2007 | New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson announces his candidacy for the Democratic nomination. |
| January 23, 2007 | Tom Vilsack exits the race. |
| January 31, 2007 | Delaware Senator Joe Biden announces his candidacy for the Democratic nomination. |
| February 10, 2007 | Illinois Senator Barack Obama announces his candidacy for the Democratic nomination. |
| March 4, 2007 | Bill Clinton makes his first (perceived) public campaign appearance, along with both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, at a rally commemorating “Bloody Sunday” in Selma, Alabama. |
| April 26, 2007 | The first Democratic Primary Debate is held in Orangeburg, South Carolina (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson). |
| May 3, 2007 | Oprah Winfrey endorses Barack Obama (a first for the talk show host). |
| June 3, 2007 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Manchester, New Hampshire (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson) |

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|-------------------|---|
| June 28, 2007 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Washington, D.C. (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson) |
| July 12, 2007 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Detroit, Michigan (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson). |
| July 23, 2007 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Charleston, South Carolina (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson). |
| August 4, 2007 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Chicago, Illinois (Participants: Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson). |
| August 7, 2007 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Chicago, Illinois (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson). |
| August 9, 2007 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Los Angeles, California (Participants: Clinton, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson). |
| August 19, 2007 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Des Moines, Iowa (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson). |
| September 9, 2007 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Coral Gables, Florida (Participants: Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson). |

September 12, 2007 A Democratic Primary Debate is held online (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson).

September 20, 2007 A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Davenport, Iowa (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, and Richardson).

September 26, 2007 A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Hanover, New Hampshire (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson).

October 30, 2007 A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson).

November 15, 2007 A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Las Vegas, Nevada (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Kucinich, Obama, and Richardson).

December 4, 2007 A radio-only Democratic Primary Debate is held in Des Moines, Iowa (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Gravel, Kucinich, and Obama).

December 13, 2007 A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Johnston, Iowa (Participants: Biden, Clinton, Dodd, Edwards, Obama, and Richardson).

December 16, 2007 Hillary Clinton delivers a speech in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

January 3, 2008 Barack Obama wins the Iowa Caucuses, while Chris Dodd and Joe Biden exit the race; Hillary Clinton's presents a speech after the Iowa caucus results are announced.

January 5, 2008 A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Manchester, New Hampshire (Participants: Clinton, Edwards, Obama, and Richardson).

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| January 7, 2008 | Hillary Clinton allegedly tears up at an informal gathering of undecided, female voters in New Hampshire. |
| January 8, 2008 | Hillary Clinton wins the New Hampshire Primary and delivers a speech thanking supporters. |
| January 10, 2008 | Bill Richardson exits the race. |
| January 15, 2008 | The Michigan primaries are held but the DNC rules that no delegates from this primary will be seated at the national convention because Democratic Party rules prohibit states other than Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina from holding nominating contests before February 5. Also, a Democratic Primary Debate is held in Las Vegas, Nevada (Participants: Clinton, Edwards, and Obama). |
| January 19, 2008 | Hillary Clinton wins the Nevada Caucuses. |
| January 21, 2008 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina (Participants: Clinton, Edwards, and Obama). |
| January 25, 2008 | Dennis Kucinich exits the race. |
| January 26, 2008 | Barack Obama wins the South Carolina Primary. |
| January 27, 2008 | Barack Obama receives endorsements from Caroline Kennedy (daughter of former President John F. Kennedy) and Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy. |
| January 29, 2008 | Florida primaries are held but the Democratic National Committee rules that no delegates from the Democratic Primary will be seated at the National Convention because Democratic Party rules prohibit states other |

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| | than Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina from holding nominating contests before February 5. |
| January 30, 2008 | John Edwards exits the race. |
| January 31, 2008 | The first debate between just Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama is held in Los Angeles, California. |
| February 2, 2008 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in New York, New York between Clinton and Obama. |
| February 5, 2008 | Super Tuesday (the largest day of the primary season); Primaries for 22 states are held. Barack Obama wins Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, and Utah. Hillary Clinton wins Arizona, Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, and Tennessee. Clinton delivers a speech thanking supporters for their efforts. |
| February 6, 2008 | With the race between Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton being very close (909 delegates for Obama and 884 delegates for Clinton), DNC Chairman Howard Dean proclaims, “we’re going to have to get the candidates together and make some kind of arrangement if there is no nominee by April” (“Timeline: 2008 Primary,” 2008, para. 55). |
| February 7, 2008 | The DNC announces that it is considering a possible revote in Michigan and Florida. |
| February 9, 2008 | Barack Obama wins the Louisiana, US Virgin Islands, Washington, and Nebraska Democratic Primaries. |

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| February 10, 2008 | Barack Obama wins the Maine Democratic Caucus. |
| February 21, 2008 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Austin, Texas between Clinton and Obama. |
| February 26, 2008 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Cleveland, Ohio between Clinton and Obama. |
| March 4, 2008 | Hillary Clinton wins the Rhode Island, Ohio, and Texas Primaries while Barack Obama wins the Vermont Primary and Texas Caucuses. Arizona Senator John McCain passes the 1,191-delegate threshold and becomes the presumptive GOP nominee. |
| March 8, 2008 | Barack Obama wins the Wyoming Democratic Caucus. |
| March 11, 2008 | Barack Obama wins the Mississippi Democratic Primary. |
| March 14, 2008 | Controversy arises over Obama's pastor Jeremiah Wright's past remarks on race and patriotism. |
| March 17, 2008 | Hillary Clinton tells a crowd at George Washington University that, during a trip to Bosnia in 1996, she landed at the airport amid sniper fire. |
| March 26, 2008 | Mike Gravel exits the race. |
| April 13, 2008 | A Democratic Primary Debate is held in Grantham, Pennsylvania between Clinton and Obama. |
| April 16, 2008 | The final Democratic Primary Debate between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama is held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. |
| April 22, 2008 | Hillary Clinton wins the Pennsylvania Democratic Primary. |
| May 6, 2008 | Hillary Clinton wins the Indiana Democratic Primary. Barack Obama wins the North Carolina Democratic Primary. |

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| May 7, 2008 | Dmitry Medvedev is sworn in as President of Russia. A day later, his predecessor Vladimir Putin is elected Prime Minister by Parliament. |
| May 13, 2008 | Hillary Clinton wins the West Virginia Democratic Primary. |
| May 15, 2008 | 2004 Vice Presidential Candidate John Edwards formally endorses Barack Obama. |
| May 20, 2008 | Hillary Clinton wins the Kentucky Democratic Primary. Barack Obama wins the Oregon Democratic Primary. |
| May 31, 2008 | Democratic Party leaders agree to seat the disputed Michigan and Florida delegations with half-votes at the summer convention. |
| June 1, 2008 | Hillary Clinton wins the Puerto Rico Democratic Primary. |
| June 3, 2008 | Barack Obama wins the Montana Primary, the last Democratic contest of 2008. |
| June 5, 2008 | Hillary Clinton officially concedes to Obama, effectively ending her presidential bid. |

All political parties have rules and regulations, but given the events of the 2008 Democratic nomination race, it is clear that the rules for both the nomination and assignment of delegates and the rules violations by Florida and Michigan created a unique backdrop for the Democratic candidates' discourse. And, as the timeline indicates, the race for the Democratic nomination was both incredibly lengthy and, at times, turbulent for both the DNC and the candidates involved. Indeed, because the pledged delegates were assigned proportionally, and because many of the super delegates delayed making their choice of candidates until late in the race or shifted their allegiances during the campaign, both Clinton and Obama had to continue their primary campaigns far longer than most candidates representing any party in recent history.

Thus, to facilitate an analysis of Clinton's campaign rhetoric in 2008, the next section of this chapter presents the specific artifacts analyzed in this study as well as the rationale for their selection.

Artifacts for Study

To begin our exploration and criticism, Clinton's speeches during the 2008 Democratic Primary campaign were located on the candidate's website (www.hillaryclinton.com). The speeches span in time from January 2007, when she began her campaign, until her speech after the conclusion of the Super Tuesday contests. A cross-section of five specific speeches was chosen from the possible hundreds of Clinton's addresses during the race for their ability to demonstrate key moments during the campaign, as well as much of the chronological breadth of the campaign. Specifically, this study analyzes 1) Clinton's announcement speech—a videotaped address wherein she formally announced her candidacy and set the tone for her campaign, 2) her major address in Council Bluffs, Iowa in December 2007, 3) her speech directly after her poor showing at the Iowa Caucuses, 4) her speech after winning the New Hampshire primary, and 5) her Super Tuesday speech.

Similarly, while Clinton participated in all twenty-six Democratic presidential primary debates during the race, five of Clinton's debate performances are analyzed via transcripts, accessed electronically from various news organizations (including *The New York Times*, *CNN*, and *MSNBC*) that also represent the key moments and chronological nature of the primary campaign. Specifically, this study analyzes Clinton's rhetoric during 1) the first Democratic primary debate on April 26, 2007, 2) the last debate with more than just the last two candidates involved on January 21, 2008, 3) the first debate with just Clinton and Obama participating on January 31, 2008, 4) the middle debate of the five involving only Clinton and Obama, that took

place on February 26, 2008, and 5) the final debate between Clinton and Obama on April 16, 2008.

Rather than analyzing each of the above speeches and debates separately, I follow Campbell's lead and use examples from each of them, in concert with historical-cultural sources found from various major newspapers (i.e. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, etc.) in order to establish the audiences, exigencies, and constraints guiding each of Clinton's speeches and debate performances, and thus, to critique Clinton's response as effective or ineffective in terms of gender. The newspapers utilized in this study were chosen based on their readership (as all are widely available and read by millions each day), and the specific articles or reports were chosen based on relevance and the temporal connection between the report and the speeches and debate performances analyzed. Each article was located using the Lexis-Nexis database or by viewing the specific website of the news organization.

While the overarching goal of this study is to explain Clinton's communication rhetorically, such an analysis, as it is rhetorical in nature, will also involve criticism. The literature presented in Chapter One provides a basis for evaluating and critiquing Clinton's rhetoric in terms of gender. Thus, these studies are used to evaluate the ways in which gendered expectations and conventions constitute the rhetorical situation, and to analyze the ways in which Clintons' rhetoric addresses gender. While I am not attempting to answer the complex, umbrella question of why Clinton failed in her efforts, this analysis points out several ways in which Clinton's campaign rhetoric failed to respond to the rhetorical problems she attempted to address throughout her candidacy for president.

Chapter Three: Analysis of Clinton's Audience

Bitzer (1968) maintained that rhetoric is constrained by several factors, among these are audiences who must be convinced through rhetoric to support individuals or actions to solve various problems. The audience, for Bitzer, is crucial to consider in terms of deciding whether or not rhetors construct and deliver messages that are “fitting” responses to rhetorical situations. Campbell (1972) concurred, asserting that rhetoric is inherently practical, seeking “to alter symbolic behavior, attitude, and/or action” among audience members (p. 2-3). In other words, it is the audience that provides the grounds for rhetorical acts; without audiences who could take action, rhetoric would be unnecessary. For the purposes of this study, the audience is comprised of those voters Hillary Clinton had to persuade in order to secure support for funding, service, positive word-of-mouth assessments, and ultimately votes. When looking at Hillary Clinton's specific audience during the 2008 presidential primary campaign, closer inspection reveals that the audience is made up of ordinary citizens, party leaders, and members of the press—a complex amalgam of individuals.

The audience perceptions of Hillary Clinton and how she adjusted to them through her rhetoric were made more complex by the fact that she was a woman seeking the highest elective position in the United States. After close textual analysis of dozens of news stories about Clinton's campaign, and looking at Clinton's own rhetoric addressing her audience, it is clear that the various audiences that comprised Clinton's rhetorical situation were a constant source of frustration for her as she sought the Democratic nomination for president. Strategically, the immediate audience in a presidential primary is likely voters. However, everything that is said in a primary contributes to perceptions and potential support in a general election. Thus, Clinton had to target likely voters but also maintain a sense of the larger audience.

Additionally, the voting behaviors exhibited in the 2008 Democratic primary season represented a dramatic shift from previous presidential primaries, further complicating Clinton's task. Typically, presidential primary voters tend to be fewer in number than in general elections, representing "diehard" party supporters. But the Democratic primary race in 2008 saw two trends complicating Clinton's approach to her audience, generally. First, record numbers of voters, especially new or first-time primary voters, took part in the process. Kent Garber, writing for *U.S. News and World Report* summed up this trend clearly:

In the first five weeks of 2008, 'voter turnout' was a phrase that was used almost exclusively in connection with the Democratic Party. There were routine stories of precincts running short on ballots, poll hours being extended, and voters packing haunch to paunch inside community centers and local churches. Crowd sizes were described, often with growing awe, as 'staggering,' 'record breaking,' or 'unprecedented.' The actual numbers justified the claims. From January 3, the day of the Iowa caucuses, to February 5, i.e. Super Tuesday, when more than 20 states held nominating contests, more than 19.1 million American cast a ballot in a Democratic primary (or caucused as a Democrat)...On a state-by-state basis, Democrats had higher turnouts than Republicans in 19 out of 25 states (2008, para. 1-3).

Garber's sentiments were echoed by *New York Times* writer Katharine Q. Seelye, who reported, "Over all, turnout was 27 percent of eligible citizens, breaking the record of 25.9 percent set during the 1972 primaries, according to the Center for the Study of the American Electorate at American University" (2008a, para. 2). With more voters taking part in the primary season, some of which had never voted in a primary election before, the audience became far less predictable

for Clinton, and thus, it became far more difficult to target voters with whom her campaign was unfamiliar.

Second, record numbers of young voters cast ballots and caucused during the primary season in 2008, especially for Barack Obama. “According to the NBC exit polls [on Super Tuesday], young voters’ share of the Democratic electorate on Feb. 5 was higher in nearly every state for which a good comparison with 2004 is available. In all of the 2008 contests for which exit poll data are available, young people have constituted an average (median) of 14% of Democratic primary voters, up from a median of 9% in the set of comparable contests in 2004” (Keeter, 2008, para. 3). It became clear early on during the primary voting season that more young people were voting than ever before and were excited about voting and taking part in the election, and primarily this was because of the excitement caused by Barack Obama’s candidacy. As later analysis demonstrates, Obama’s appeal to young voters of all races, socio-economic backgrounds, and regardless of gender, represented a key problem for Clinton’s campaign.

With this general backdrop in mind, and despite her many years of experience with campaigning and dealing with Democratic voters, Clinton was at a loss during her campaign as to how to effectively approach her audiences. Generally, the audiences to whom Clinton spoke were problematic due to shifts in perception between the beginning and the end of the race, and because of the expectations espoused by audience members that went unsatisfied by Clinton during her campaign. To fully understand the audience component of Clinton’s rhetorical situation, several salient topics during the campaign are analyzed over the next few pages: Perceptions regarding Clinton’s initial status as the frontrunner, the erosion of Clinton’s female voting base, Clinton’s response to sexism, voters’ perception of Clinton’s use of negative campaigning, and Clinton’s appeal to super delegates.

Perceptions Regarding Clinton's Initial Status as the Frontrunner

Clinton began the campaign with confidence and ease, seemingly avoiding the complications most female politicians face when attempting to secure support from citizens. Months before she made the online announcement that she was, indeed, forming a presidential exploratory committee, speculation abounded that she was going to run, and that when she finally made such an announcement, she would be the lead contender (Wolf, 2007). Indeed, absent Barack Obama, who had made a name for himself among Democrats because of his compelling speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, and John Edwards, who had run as John Kerry's vice presidential nominee in the 2004 presidential election, none of her Democrat rivals were perceived as standouts. As such, according to some of the early polls, Clinton dominated her fellow Democratic candidates by double-digit margins, and a majority of voters viewed Clinton favorably (Balz, 2007b; Balz & Craig, 2008; Kantor, 2008b; Kiely, 2007; Kornblut & Cohen, 2007). Many of these same polls also indicated that, nationally, Clinton enjoyed a slight lead or was running even in hypothetical matchups with Republican rivals John McCain, Mitt Romney, and Rudy Giuliani (Balz, 2007b).

Hillary Clinton's lead in the polls led many, including many of Clinton's campaign staff members, to believe that the Democratic nomination race would be short—most likely wrapped up by early February 2008 (“Super Tuesday voters,” 2008). Indeed, the early polling success that Clinton enjoyed shocked few political insiders. Hillary Clinton, after all, was a political celebrity (Murray & Kane, 2008). Balz (2007b) characterized Clinton's persona early in the campaign succinctly:

As a former first lady now serving her second term in the Senate, she has one of the best-known names in American politics. She has a national network of supporters, the

capacity to raise as much or more money than any of her rivals, and a résumé of political activity dating back decades that now includes six years in the Senate and a landslide reelection victory in November. And for the past 15 years, she has shown an ability to weather sometimes harsh attacks from her critics, especially among conservatives (para. 10-11).

Clinton's celebrity compelled many to travel long distances to meet and support her, and it was also noted in the early days that Clinton received far more requests for photos and autographs than any of her competitors (Leibovich, 2007). Thus, Clinton did not face many of the barriers that women like her have typically faced in running for political office (barriers like establishing name recognition, setting up networks of supporters and donors, challenging male incumbents, etc.). As such, Clinton was able to approach her audience conversationally, reminiscent of a traditionally feminine rhetorical style. Clinton stated, "I'm not just starting a campaign, though, I'm beginning a conversation—with you, with America" (Clinton, 2007a, para. 2).

When Clinton finally announced that she was forming a presidential exploratory committee, instead of a formal, conventional message, viewers witnessed Clinton lounging comfortably on a couch, acting more as a peer conversing with friends rather than "the single most powerful woman in America" announcing her bid for the most powerful political position in the nation (Murray & Kane, 2008, para. 22). Hornaday (2007) characterized the announcement for *The Washington Post* succinctly: "Perched almost comfortably on a shabby-chic couch with a carefully rumped pillow at her back, Clinton spoke in that intimate tone befitting her rhetoric, which focused on words like "conversation" and "chat" (para. 3). As support for Hornaday's assertion, within her short announcement speech, Clinton noted that she would hold live video chats during the following weeks in order to see what Americans felt were

the salient issues in the 2008 election (Lawrence, 2007a). This strategy was wise, given what we know about how women, and presidential contenders, have most effectively approached citizens. Such an approach to her announcement seemed in keeping with Campbell's (1989; 1998) feminine rhetorical style previously articulated, and was a wise way to approach the announcement via a polished, highly produced video message, establishing a sense of intimacy between Clinton and voters on par with the advice offered previously by Han (2003) and Jamieson (1988). This approach to communicating with voters also was sound given the pervasive negative opinions regarding Clinton that haunted her since Bill Clinton first ran for president. A conversational approach would seem to have helped counteract these negative perceptions since Hillary Clinton had widely been perceived as unfeminine, dominating, controlling, and uncaring (Anderson & Sheeler, 2005; Corrigan, 2000; Dubriwny, 2005; Parry-Giles, 2000; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996). As such, because Clinton approached her audience in a more traditionally feminine way, she was able to enjoy an early lead in polls.

However, once the speeches, debates, and ad wars began, Hillary Clinton's rhetoric shifted from this conversational approach to a more traditional campaign format, which left the audience more in a spectator role rather than that of a participant as initially offered by Clinton. Consequently, the audience seemed to turn on Clinton on a number of fronts, especially as the Iowa and New Hampshire contests loomed closer. Part of the problem, as discussed in Chapter Five (analysis of constraints), was the nature of the contest in Iowa and her subsequent defeat in these caucuses. Nagourney and Healy (2007) opined that the Clinton campaign was ignorant of the nature of the caucus system in Iowa, and theorized that Iowans viewed the Clinton team as even arrogant about Clinton's chances despite Obama's narrow lead in the polls in the run up to

the caucuses. Indeed, both Obama and Edwards were doing better than Clinton in the polls, and both ended up beating her on January 3 (Healy, 2007b). Kornblut (2009b) suggested that Mark Penn, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager, was primarily at fault for Clinton's lackluster performances in caucus states, and contended that he was not even aware until later in the race that the Democratic Party did not utilize the 'winner-take-all' model of primary contests utilized by Republicans. Whatever the case may have been, Clinton's status as frontrunner quickly diminished once the primaries began.

The perceptions that led to Clinton's decline in favor among her audience was due to many factors, one being the perception that she was ill-equipped to handle the political climate in Iowa and New Hampshire which had changed since her husband had taken office. "Some New Hampshire Democrats expressed concern that Mrs. Clinton's first dinner with political players from that state, on Dec. 9, was limited to three who were active in her husband's campaigns in the 1990s and not a broader group that reflected the vanguard of state party politics today" (Healy & Nagourney, 2007, para. 28). Such a concern among voters was warranted in that it contradicted the personalized, intimate tone set by Clinton early in her campaign. It is important to remember the glut of research suggesting the specific traits associated with female politicians; among other characteristics, voters expect women to embody honesty, integrity, cooperation with others, and an emphasis on relationships with voters (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Buchanan, 1996; Bystrom, 2004; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 1998; Fox & Schuhmann, 1999; Gilligan, 1993; Han, 2003; Helgesen, 1995; Witt, et al., 1994). Thus, when Clinton seemed to embody traditionally feminine characteristics and styles while also defying many of the expected traits of female politicians, voters likely became confused, unable to reconcile the two images. The result, arguably, was a loss of support when Clinton's actions (utilizing conventional tactics positioning

voters as spectators) did not seemingly match her rhetoric (evoking the unconventional, feminine context of a conversation) when communicating with voters.

Others contended that Clinton's central issue was not appearing likeable and warm, causing voters to shift their allegiances to Obama or Edwards who seemed to embody these characteristics. After all, Obama and Edwards regularly self-disclosed aspects of their lives and personalities; whereas Clinton regularly avoided such displays. One prominent exception to this personality trait of Clinton's was witnessed on the eve of the New Hampshire primary when Clinton allegedly cried—or almost cried. After coming in third in the Iowa caucuses, and facing pressure from all sides about her chances in New Hampshire, Clinton became emotional at an informal gathering of undecided female voters. Healy (2008b) summed up this event succinctly:

Everything is on the table inside Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign if she loses the New Hampshire primary on Tuesday, her advisers say—including her style of campaigning, which shifted dramatically on Monday when Mrs. Clinton bared her thoughts about the race's impact on her personally, and her eyes welled with tears: 'I couldn't do it if I just didn't passionately believe it was the right thing to do,' she said here in reply to a question from an undecided voter, a woman roughly Mrs. Clinton's age. Her eyes visibly wet, in perhaps the most public display of emotion of her year-old campaign, Mrs. Clinton added: 'I have so many opportunities from this country, I just don't want to see us fall backwards. This is very personal for me—it's not just political, it's not just public.' Mrs. Clinton did not cry, but her quavering voice and the flash of feeling underscored the pressure, fatigue, anger and disappointment that, advisers say, Mrs. Clinton has experienced since her loss on Thursday in the Iowa caucuses and that she continues to shoulder at this most critical moment (para. 2-5).

Once word of Clinton's 'break down' spread, countless voters and news reporters began speculating about the incident, wondering if it was an authentic moment of self-disclosure or a calculated action designed to convince voters who doubted Clinton's warmth and sincerity to vote for the former First Lady. Dalia Lithwick, a blogger for Slate.com, summed up the fears of this latter segment of the audience after this incident on the eve of the New Hampshire primary: "...How does a woman who has worn so many masks; who is so dependent on pollsters; and who is backed by a huge political machine going to sustain being the warm, likable person we glimpsed?" ("Did 'near-tear,'" 2008, para. 2). Lithwick was certainly not alone in her doubts about Clinton's authenticity, and several major news sources carried stories speculating as to whether Clinton's alleged tears on the trail were motivated by genuine emotion or political profiteering (Dowd, 2008; Healy, 2008b; Kantor, 2008a; Kantor, 2008b; Kornblut, 2008). Regardless of the reality behind Clinton's actions, the general perception widely reported was that Clinton was rarely emotional, causing a perceptual disconnect between herself and voters, and necessitating a rhetorical response or demonstration by the candidate that never came during the rest of campaign.

Understanding that her support among voters was waning, Clinton needed to address the issue rhetorically, namely through her campaign speeches and debate performances. One way Clinton addressed the issue was to cite several examples and stories from individuals whom she had encountered on the campaign trail in order to implicitly deny her lack of connection with voters. During her speech in Council Bluffs, Iowa, she spoke of "Connie Gronstal and her daughter Kate and her husband Mike" who all joined the campaign to support her, and of the anonymous Iowan who told her how his newly-registered 18-year-old daughter was going to caucus for Clinton, along with the 102-year old man she had met who would be doing the same

thing (Clinton, 2007b, para. 2). This type of strategy, that stressed her connection to voters, was a common element of Clinton's rhetoric. In New Hampshire, Clinton said, "I've met families in this state and all over our country..." (Clinton, 2008b, para. 3). Even after her glaring defeat in the Iowa caucuses (coming in third behind Obama and Edwards), Clinton approached her Iowa audience as a gathering of friends, and noted that she had "more than six million union members who support my candidacy," seemingly trying to disprove or mitigate, rhetorically, the outcome of the caucuses (Clinton, 2008a, para. 18).

This was an apt move for Clinton as during times of trouble during the campaign, the tone of media headlines perpetuated the idea that Clinton was too distant from actual voters, and relied instead on polling numbers to determine her strategies. Nagourney and Healy (2007) made this implication by clearly titling their article, "Feeling Heat, Clinton Tries Iowa Up Close," while Lawrence (2008b) seemingly decried Clinton's poor showing as a result of poor strategy with her article entitled, "Strategy Plays Big Role in Caucus Win; Obama's Score Vs. Clinton's Reflects Campaign Choices."

In New Hampshire, after her surprise win in the primary, Clinton was clearer than ever in trying to demonstrate a real bond with the voting public when she claimed, "Over the last week, I listened to you and in the process, I found my own voice. I felt like we all spoke from our hearts, and I am so grateful that you responded" (Clinton, 2008b, para. 1-2). Clinton continued to develop this theme throughout the rest of this victory speech, perpetuating the idea that she did, regardless of what polling may have indicated, have many vocal supporters who would, in the end, propel her to victory. Clinton (2008b) stated, "I believe deeply in America, in our can-do spirit, in our ability to meet any challenge and solve any problem. I believe in what we can do together. In the future, we will build together" (para. 6). Perhaps most clearly, Clinton ended her

New Hampshire victory speech by declaring: “Every single day, I am not going out there on my own. I am going out there accompanied by millions and millions of people who believe, as I do, that this country is worth fighting for” (Clinton, 2008b, para. 17). Thus, Clinton’s key speeches during the campaign seemed ignorant of the reality of her rhetorical situation. In the face of waning support, Clinton used her speeches to make it seem as if she had countless supporters and friends who would help her succeed. And while this may have reflected a Clinton campaign strategy of diminishing the importance of the early contests in lieu of presenting the image of a campaign that enjoyed a national base of support, Clinton’s rhetoric failed to match the reality her audience witnessed in Iowa and other states wherein Clinton lost. As such, Clinton’s rhetorical strategy was ineffective in responding to the early challenges that the Iowa caucuses represented for her candidacy in terms of declining support.

In response to the challenges that her campaign support was eroding, Clinton was also careful in her speeches to demonstrate the intense support she allegedly enjoyed from a variety of different voting blocks. In her remarks on Super Tuesday, Clinton stated, “Tonight, we are hearing the voices of people all across America. People of all ages and of all colors, all faiths and all walks of life” (Clinton, 2008c, para. 2-3). On Super Tuesday, Clinton also made a rare reference to the historic nature of her candidacy as a woman, perhaps in an attempt to shore up the fickle women’s vote that was dwindling. Clinton noted, “I want to thank all my friends and family, particularly my mother, who was born before women could vote, and is watching her daughter on this stage tonight” (Clinton, 2008c, para. 21). Still, remarks like these were infrequent and did not sway voters sufficiently.

She adopted this same type of strategy throughout her debate performances, as well. During the January 2008 South Carolina debate, Clinton prefaced one of her comments by

stating, "...What I hear as I go in and out of people's homes and talk to so many..." ("The Democratic Debate in South," 2008, para. 203). Later in this same debate, Clinton attempted to soften the image created by and through the press (and in the minds of voters) that she was unfeeling or uncaring. She asserted that the election was...

...about the people of America. And my voice is their voice. What I want to do is take not only my 35 years of experience into the White House, but I want to take all those voices of these extraordinary Americans who come up to me and tell me their stories and give me hope and inspiration that I can do something for them. Because that's what it's about for me...I want to be the champion that once again gives Americans the feeling that they have a president who cares about them and can produce results for them. And that's what I intend to do ("The Democratic Debate in South," 2008, para. 596-597).

In her first debate with only Senator Obama, she also attempted to dispel the idea that her support was eroding with subtle lines like "...I've been going to town halls all over America, and I see the people out there, thousands of them who come to hear me speak..." ("Transcript of Thursdays," 2008, para. 274). Later in this debate, she also tried to soften her image by presenting a nurturing persona reminiscent of the feminine style: "...day after day, what I spend my time working on is trying to help pick up the pieces for families and for injured soldiers, you know, trying to make sure that they get the help that they need..." (para. 493).

This strategy wherein Clinton attempted to convey warmth and sincerity to her audience was also evident in the February 26, 2008 debate against Obama—a debate that was incredibly heated (as is discussed in the next section and in Chapter Five). At the end of this debate, after being harangued by the late Tim Russert on countless issues and challenged for embodying less

than ethical behavior by Obama himself, Clinton attempted to engage in damage control with her rhetoric. Clinton stated:

You know, when I wasn't successful about getting universal health care, I didn't give up. I just got to work and helped to create the Children's Health Insurance Program. And, you know, today in Ohio 140,000 kids have health insurance. And yet this morning in Lorain, a mother said that she spent with the insurance and everything over \$3 million taking care of her daughter, who had a serious accident. And she just looked at me, as so many mothers and fathers have over so many years, and said, "Will you help us?" That's what my public life has been about. I want to help the people of this country get the chances they deserve ("The Democratic Debate," 2008, para. 310-311).

This was seemingly an excellent way to end the debate, given the perception that she was losing support and was not likable. Unfortunately, the words that followed this touching appeal fed into the skepticism surrounding her persona, as evident from the newspaper reports and interviews with voters previously presented. Clinton continued, "You know, the wealthy and the well-connected have had a president. It's time we have a president for the middle class and working people, the people who get up every day and do the very best they can. And they deserve somebody who gets up in the White House and goes to bat for them" (para. 312). Thus, Clinton's own rhetoric, though designed to counter arguments against her not being a warm, sincere, authentic individual, served to remind them that, while she may claim to not be wealthy or well connected, she was both of these things, and thus, not like the average American voter. Consequently, this aspect of Clinton's campaign rhetoric also failed to meet the demands presented by her rhetorical situation.

In terms of dealing with this specific audience perception of dwindling support, Clinton was caught in a unique double bind between acknowledging the failings of her campaign and using her rhetorical acts to stop the bleeding. If she had admitted diminished support, and thus, a weakness in her campaign, it is likely to assume that her campaign would have suffered more given the tendency among voters to support the perceptually stronger candidate. On the other hand, by not acknowledging this weakness, Clinton seemed arrogant and lacking in genuine authenticity. Thus, Clinton was unable to react to this specific deficit through her campaign rhetoric properly and move her audience to support her nomination.

The Erosion of Clinton's Female Voting Base

Another challenge Clinton faced on the audience front was from an unsuspecting source: her base of women voters. For the most part, this voting bloc had always been a stalwart source of support for Clinton (Dilanian, 2008). And in the end, Clinton did have the most support from women, as a whole, over Obama but not by a huge margin (only nine percentage points across states with exit polls) (Hirshman, 2008b). Indeed, though the female voting bloc had been one site of consistent support for Clinton during her two senate campaigns, women around the country began to jump ship for the Obama campaign, aided in part because of negative perceptions of Clinton's personality, and also because of an early and unprecedented endorsement of Obama by Oprah Winfrey (Murray & Kornblut, 2007). Kornblut (2009b) argued in her analysis of the campaign that the divide among women was primarily a generational one, and noted that older women supported Clinton much more so than younger women. Kornblut stated, "Mothers and grandmothers who saw themselves in Clinton and formed the core of her support faced a confounding phenomenon: their daughters did not much care whether a woman won or lost. There was nothing, in their view, all that special about electing a woman—

particularly [Hillary Clinton]—president. Not when the milestone of electing an African-American was at hand” (p. 15).

This trend was in keeping with scholarship that has indicated that women do not necessarily vote for a candidate because of gender (Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 2006; Lawless, 2004; Rosenthal, 1998a). In response, Clinton’s campaign increased the number of television ads, paid calls, and targeted mailing geared toward women voters. Clinton failed, however, to target this specific demographic overtly in her key speeches and debate performances, and thus, she was unable to overcome the challenges posed by this specific audience. As Obama strategist Steve Hildebrand rightly pointed out during the campaign, “the Clinton logic is wrong, because it is based on ‘the assumption that women voters are going to support Hillary Clinton because she’s a woman. That’s not how voters make up their minds’” (in Murray & Kornblut, 2007, para. 13). Kornblut (2009b) asserted that this was one of the key mistakes of Clinton’s campaign, in that her primary staffers assumed that the key challenge they would face would be persuading men to vote for Clinton.

One New Hampshire voter, a Ms. Tostenson, interviewed by *The Washington Post*, shed light on why women may have failed to turn out en masse for Clinton. Tostenson stated, “I couldn’t get past a basic distrust I had for her and for some of her personal choices” (Williams, 2008, para. 4-5). Specifically, Tostenson disagreed with Clinton’s decision to stay with Bill Clinton after the Lewinsky scandal, and claimed, “she could have set a better example” (para. 12). She was also not swayed by Clinton’s attempts to identify with working-class women like herself: “[Tostenson] does not think that Clinton knows what it means to stretch \$63 at the grocery store and leave with only three bags of food. She doesn’t think Clinton can relate to someone who has to spend virtually her whole check on heating oil” (para. 13). Tostenson, like

millions of other voters, did feel that the Obamas' lives "[felt] authentic to her in a way that the Clintons, who have long been public figures, [did] not" (para. 16). Views like this, combined with the reality that younger women were not supporting Clinton en masse, resulted in a surge of early support by young women toward Obama and John Edwards: "Half of all women between the ages of eighteen and forty-four voted for Obama in [Iowa]; 15 percent of those young women voted for former North Carolina Senator John Edwards; Clinton came in third overall, including among young women" (Kornblut, 2009b, p. 83).

This lack of support offered to Clinton by women voters was significant. Hirshman (2008a) argued the Democratic primary race gave proof to the fragmented nature of the women's vote, and asserted that the primary division line between women who voted for Clinton or Obama was, in actuality, class-based: "...each passing week since Super Tuesday has seen a further erosion in support from the senator from New York among the educated classes" (para. 7-8). Key evidence of the split among women voters came late in the campaign when NARAL (the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws) endorsed Obama. NARAL broke rank with many other reproductive rights organizations, such as Planned Parenthood, in endorsing any candidate, let alone one who was running against an ardent pro-choice woman (Seelye, 2008b).

The erosion of this aspect of Clinton's voting base was in large part because of Clinton's rhetoric during the campaign. Clinton's key speeches, overall, seemed less targeted toward specific demographic groups, even those that had supported her in the past, and more focused on presenting her candidacy as a vote for the middle-of-the-road American. From the very beginning, Clinton stated, "I grew up in a middle-class family in the middle of America..." (Clinton, 2007a, para. 8), and attempted to warm herself to voters as she vowed to try to visit as many Americans' living rooms as she could. In Iowa, she told her audience a similar story: "I

grew up in a middle class family outside of Chicago, right here in the Midwest....So we lived the middle class values...we had to work hard, be self-reliant, be resilient... (Clinton, 2007b, para. 12). She continued this theme in later speeches, arguing that she wanted to “rebuild a strong and prosperous middle class...” (Clinton, 2008a, para. 7). And while this tactic has been sound for many politicians running for president, in that it can appeal to a broader base of potential voters, it mitigated the uniqueness of Clinton’s candidacy as a woman and failed to address any particular voting bloc. As such, because she failed to address any specific group, namely women, whose support was deeply divided between her candidacy and Obama’s, Clinton’s rhetoric again failed to adapt to her unique rhetorical situation generally, and the needs or desires of the female voting bloc specifically.

Clinton’s debate performances also showed a candidate who was clearly trying to present herself as the best candidate for the middle class rather than any particular group of voters. From the outset of the debate on January 21, 2008, Clinton stated, “Well, Joe [Johns], I’m glad you started with the economy, because that is the number-one issue... at the kitchen tables of Americans today and what they’re talking to me about” (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 4). She went on to argue that she was the candidate who was fighting to prevent families from losing their American Dreams, and that she had reached out to those on fixed incomes and who were having trouble paying energy costs. Also, in her last debate, Clinton seemed intent on reminding voters of her middle-class roots as she noted, “I am the granddaughter of a factory worker from Scranton” (“Democratic Debate in Philadelphia,” 2008, para. 48). None of these statements directly targeted women, nor did they address the concerns of the vast majority of younger voters who supported Obama in record numbers throughout the

primary and general elections. As such, Clinton's rhetoric represented a tangible disconnect between herself and any key voting base, including women.

The loss of the women's vote did not represent the death of Clinton's presidential aspirations altogether, but it was indicative of Clinton's over-arching rhetorical strategy during the campaign. Clinton's campaign rhetoric, as is supported throughout the analysis chapters in this study, was characterized by a lack of awareness of the specific rhetorical situation in which she campaigned. Thus, Clinton failed to provide rhetoric that 'fit' with the situation. Her failure among women voters clearly signaled Clinton's penchant for framing her rhetoric around a general, hypothetical audience rather than key voting blocs she could have persuaded to support her nomination. Similarly, Clinton failed to address the sexism that permeated the 2008 primary campaign, an idea that is explored fully in the next section, and thus, could have also alienated women voters who sought a more direct response from Clinton. As such, Clinton's rhetoric, if nothing else, did not satisfy this segment of her audience, costing her dearly in terms of votes and support.

Clinton's Response to Sexism

Though one might expect the topic of sexism to be a dominant theme during the Clinton campaign, as she was the first woman in U.S. history widely perceived as having a chance at winning a major party's nomination for president, the reality was quite different. Aside from a few notable exceptions, the majority of the eighteen-month campaign was not spent on the subject of sexism among the electorate or campaign officials. This is surprising given several studies post-2008 that have documented the tangible sexism targeting Clinton, and Sarah Palin later in the general election. Kornblut (2009b) has asserted that in hindsight, the 2008 elections "revived old stereotypes, divided the women's movement, drove apart mothers and daughters,

and set back the cause of equality in the political sphere by decades” (p. 1). Carlin and Winfrey (2009) agreed, and contended that while Clinton and Palin both experienced “overt sexism,” especially from news media sources, both ignored it, choosing instead to focus on their respective campaign messages. The analysis in this section confirms the assertions of these authors, and indicates that Clinton, almost without exception, did ignore sexism during her campaign. There were, of course, those few exceptions that require inspection in order to fully understand the role that Clinton’s response to sexism played in terms of her audience.

A clear example of sexism among the electorate came early in the campaign. While campaigning in New Hampshire, hecklers at one of Clinton’s stops yelled, “Iron my shirt” while Clinton addressed the crowd (Dowd, 2008). This occurrence seemingly had the opposite intended reaction among voters, especially women, which the heckler had intended. Dowd (2008) made the assertion that this incident “stirred sisterhood,” and may have aided Clinton in achieving her turnaround in the New Hampshire primary (para. 14). Kantor (2008b) argued that these hecklers had “angered untold numbers of women after the incident was widely reported” (para. 15).

The blatant sexism of this comment took place among a host of other less obvious examples of sexism. During the primary campaign, Clinton was criticized by some due to the shrill pitch of her voice. John Edwards, during one debate, also felt the need to critique the bright yellow color of Hillary Clinton’s jacket, while at another debate, a woman in the audience felt compelled to ask Clinton whether she preferred diamonds or pearls (Kantor, 2008b). Instances like these compelled Kantor (2008b), shortly after the New Hampshire primary, to assert:

If the race wasn’t about gender already, it certainly is now. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton has been running for president for nearly a year. But in the past week,

women in Iowa mostly rejected her, a few days before women in New Hampshire embraced her. All over the country, viewers scrutinized coverage for signs of chauvinism in the race, and many said they found dismaying examples (para. 1-2). Another example was pointed out by Kornblut (2009a) who, in reflecting on the 2008 campaign, remarked, “It would be very easy, in the gauzy view of history, to forget how ugly the contest became for the two women [Clinton, and later Sarah Palin] who broke new ground in the 2008 presidential campaign. Remember Clinton’s sagging eyes, splashed across the Drudge Report, as Rush Limbaugh asked whether the country would want to watch a woman grow old in office?” (para. 2).

These examples are striking, but somewhat expected given what we know about how news sources report about women in politics. Though several studies have indicated women are no longer plagued, as they once were, with unfair and unequal treatment in the press, female politicians are still scrutinized most closely in terms of their attire and physical appearance (Duerst-Lahti, 2006). Thus, while this attention to her physical appearance may have helped Clinton, in terms of unifying women to defend against this unfair examination, these same stories likely diminished the weight of Clinton’s campaign messages (Banwart, et al., 2003; Bystrom, 2003a; Bystrom, 2003b; Bystrom, 2004; Carroll & Schreiber, 1997; Han, 2003; Niven & Zilber, 2001). As such, these stories would have, in theory, compelled Clinton to have tailored responses to sexism during her speeches and debate performances—to answer her critics, raise awareness about sexism in politics, or even to shore up support among women. However, any such responses were largely absent.

When the Clinton campaign would offer a response to sexism, the message would sometimes fall on deaf ears—or ears that perceived the issue from a different vantage point.

Voter Gaby Kloiber of Bluffton, South Carolina summed up the beliefs of many voters, especially younger voters, with regard to sexism on the campaign trail: “Contrary to what some pundits are saying, this election is not about gender or race; it is about old politics vs. a new way of thinking” (“Rave vs. gender,” 2008, para. 11). One of the pundits to whom Kloiber was referring was Geraldine Ferraro. Ferraro, the one-time female vice presidential candidate for the Democrats in 1984—the only woman to, at the time, ever held such a distinction—was widely regarded as a staunch supporter of Clinton’s candidacy. For a time she had held an honorary position within Clinton’s campaign until some of her comments against Obama’s candidacy made national news. Specifically, Ferraro told a California newspaper late in the primary campaign “If Obama was a white man, he would not be in this position,” sparking hostility against the one-time vice presidential nominee and diminishing her regard among Clinton’s female supporters (“Race vs. gender,” 2008, para. 2). This specific situation demonstrated the problems Clinton and her campaign had with responding to the gender issues generally, and sexism on the trail specifically, again highlighting the potential need for Clinton to address the issue herself through campaign speeches and debate performances.

Indeed, part of the frustration experienced by Clinton’s audience was caused by her abject lack of response to charges of sexism. None of the key speeches analyzed in this study mentioned sexism at all, and it only came up sparingly in Clinton’s debate performances in indirect statements from Clinton. During the debate in Cleveland, after receiving, yet again, the first question on a new subject, Clinton complained:

Well, can I just point out that in the last several debates, I seem to get the first question all the time. I don’t mind. I—you know, I’ll be happy to field them, but I do find it curious, and if anybody saw “Saturday Night Live,” you know, maybe we

should ask Barack if he's comfortable and needs another pillow. (laughter, boos.) I just find it kind of curious that I keep getting the first question on all of these issues ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 80).

In addressing potential sexism during the debates in this way, Clinton attempted to show her frustration with her (perceived) unequal treatment, but still only hinted at the inequality, having never charged Obama or the moderators with sexism. In doing so, Clinton missed an opportunity to connect with the segment of her audience who felt the treatment directed at Clinton was sexist and unequal, fostering an even greater sense of frustration that Clinton would not or could not make such charges cogently during the campaign.

Another perceived disparity between her treatment and Obama's on the part of debate moderators surfaced during the final debate. The moderator, Charles Gibson, noted, "And Senator Clinton, I'm getting out of balance in terms of time," to which Clinton replied, "I've noticed" ("Democratic Debate in Philadelphia," 2008, para. 170-171). Again, Clinton hinted at charges of inequality, but failed to make such an argument using clear, unmistakable rhetoric. Still, these disparities, while they may have hinted at sexist undertones during the debates, seem less about expressed sexism toward Clinton and more about a possible favoritism toward Obama (a constraint that is analyzed specifically in Chapter Five).

A lack of response to charges of sexism during the campaign could have hurt Clinton. For older Democratic women voters, a response may not have been necessary, but her younger audience may have needed it. According to Kantor (2008b), "In interviews, some Democratic women over 40, who said they had experienced stinging sexism at school and in the workplace, seemed to long for the election of a female president—they said Mrs. Clinton would fill the role just fine—as a grand moment of validation. But younger women, who have grown up in a world

of greater parity, seemed less likely to allow gender to influence their vote” (para. 22). If Kantor was correct, then it may not have made much of a difference if Clinton had featured her response to sexism more dominantly in her rhetoric. However, the lack of direct response to sexism during the campaign, or of her gender in general, was a striking element of Clinton’s rhetoric. And as is evident in Chapter Five, the constraints faced by Clinton as a woman running for the presidency created a tangible double bind that greatly constrained Clinton’s ability to talk about her unique situation as a woman in the campaign.

Voters’ Perceptions of Clinton’s Use of Negative Campaigning

Another key factor in Clinton’s rhetorical situation during her campaign was the audience’s reaction to her use of negative campaigning. Early on during her campaign in Iowa, according to Kornblut (2007), there was speculation that Clinton was struggling to deliver attacks on Obama, specifically, with the appropriate tone in order to avoid backlash “in a state where voters have been known to recoil at negative campaigning” (para. 24). Kornblut went on to assert, “Some of her attacks on Mr. Obama, including one in which she questioned his character and another staff mocked him for writing a kindergarten essay saying he wanted to be president, were described even by some of her supporters as clumsy” (para. 24).

Another early gaffe, as interpreted by the press as a predilection for negative campaigning on Clinton’s part, occurred shortly before the Iowa caucuses. After claiming that Clinton would begin drawing more contrasts between herself and her rivals for the nomination, Clinton commented, “‘now the fun part starts’” (Lawrence, 2007b, para. 13). Upon hearing of this comment from Clinton, Obama’s campaign manager berated Clinton for saying that attacking her opponents was ‘the fun part,’ and quickly added that the Obama campaign disagreed with such a sentiment (Lawrence, 2007b). The use of negative campaigning in this

way was problematic in that it reinforced the audience's negative impression that Clinton was an utterly conventional candidate, doing whatever she had to in order to win an election, further complicating her rhetorical response to perceptions that she lacked typically feminine traits such as warmth and nurturance. And while the use of negative campaigning is not uncommon by women politicians, as noted by Bystrom (2004) and Banwart and McKinney (2005), the use of attacks by Clinton specifically, because of her established lack of audience-perceived femininity, greatly impeded her rhetorical attempts to establish rapport with her audience.

Whether Clinton's label as a negative campaigner was deserved or not, stories proliferated that echoed this sentiment and resonated with voters. Such sentiments were expressed clearly in the words of Gaby Kloiber of Bluffton, South Carolina who shared her views about Clinton's attacks during the campaign in an interview with the *USA Today*:

I am a white female, who for many years has believed that a female president would lead this country and the world in a different direction. Hillary Clinton, however, is the embodiment of everything that is wrong with our political system. Granted, she is tough and will do anything to get elected, but she doesn't represent the majority of women. I don't think she is the best leader because she is divisive ("Race vs. gender," 2008, para. 7-8).

Comments about Clinton's candidacy like these are likely linked to her lack of traditionally feminine traits, as previously discussed. The above comments are particularly interesting because they link negative image traits with a lack of leadership qualities. Despite research that has indicated that male leadership traits, such as toughness and assertiveness, are expected of those running for president, our culture has also prized the relational skills embodied by female leadership (Gilligan, 1993; Tolleson & Rinehart, 2001). Thus, while voters may have expected

Clinton to engage in negative campaigning because this has been deemed normal behavior for presidential candidates, her gender complicated her use of such attacks and necessitated a rhetorical response from Clinton in order to reverse the damaging nature of these perceptions.

When we turn to Hillary Clinton's speeches and debate performances in order to see how she responded to criticism of her negative attacks, a stark contrast between the two rhetorical contexts (Clinton's speeches and debates) is apparent. There was not a single instance of negative campaigning—whether it be attacking any of her Democratic rivals, questioning their credentials, or engaging in any type of mud-slinging behavior—present during any of her key speeches analyzed in this study, though such messages may have been present in other speeches. Clinton's debate performances, however, tell a different story. There were several examples, both implicit and explicit, wherein Clinton employed an attack strategy, as one might expect from the adversarial nature of a political debate. Similarly, there were just as many instances wherein Clinton attempted to deflect the criticism of her negative campaigning strategy made by Obama (and the moderators) during the debates.

Initially, one tactic that Clinton used to attack Obama was in asserting that he would say one thing while doing another. In the first South Carolina debate, Clinton argued, "it is sometimes difficult to understand what Senator Obama has said, because as soon as he is confronted on it, he says that's not what he meant" ("The Democratic Debate in South," 2008, para. 97). More often than not, she would then go on to provide some sort of quantifiable evidence to support her assertion, as she did following the attack cited above: "The facts are that he has said in the last week that he really liked the ideas of the Republicans over the last 10 to 15 years, and we can give you the exact quote" ("The Democratic Debate in South," 2008, para. 98). This line of attack extended into the area of funding proposals championed by the candidates

in which Clinton attacked Obama for creating potentially false promises for voters: “And with respect to putting forth how one would pay for all of the programs that we’re proposing in this campaign, I will be more than happy, Barack, to get the information, because we have searched for it. You have a lot of money that you want to put into foreign aid, a very worthy program. There is no evidence from your Web site, from your speeches, as to how you would pay for it” (“Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 102-103). Later on in this same debate, Clinton asserted, “Well, you know, Senator Obama, it is very difficult having a straight-up debate with you, because you never take responsibility for any vote, and that has been a pattern” (para. 256). Clinton made similar charges against Obama in the Cleveland debate, attacking Obama’s affinity for speech-making while not backing up these speeches with actions: “So the fair comparison was when we both had responsibility, when it wasn’t just a speech but it was actually action, where is the difference” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 134). These instances, based on the audience perceptions that Clinton was, indeed, running a negative campaign, indicate that when Clinton would attack and then return to substantive issues during her campaign debate performances, the negative impression remained. Thus, the audience, once attack strategies were employed, did not seem to be able (or willing) to differentiate between Clinton’s tactics.

Obama, for his part, was careful to consistently respond to Clinton’s negative attacks, and to often link Hillary Clinton to her and her husband’s negative campaigning (a specific constraint Hillary faced that is analyzed in Chapter Five). During the first South Carolina Debate, Obama asserted, “What she said wasn’t true. We account for every single dollar we propose. Now, this, I think, is one of the things that’s happened during the course of this campaign, that there’s a set of assertions made by Senator Clinton, as well as her husband, that are not factually accurate”

(“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 85-86). For Obama, in considering the audience reaction to Clinton’s negative attacks specifically, this was a wise strategy, especially given the negative reaction to Bill Clinton’s predilection for acting as ‘surrogate attack dog’ on the campaign trail—a role that many voters felt hurt Hillary Clinton’s image (Baker, 2008).

Obama was also quick to attack Clinton for her ties to corporate interests, stressing his connection with ‘the people.’ Obama stated, “...while I was working on those streets watching those folks lose their job shift overseas, you were a corporate lawyer sitting on the board at Wal-Mart” (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 127). Later in this debate, Clinton fired back, “...I was fighting against those ideas [of Republicans in the 1990s] when you were practicing law and representing your contributor, Resco, in his slumlord business in inner city Chicago” (para. 163). This back-and-forth exchange would have seemingly hurt both candidates—Clinton because she was engaging in mud-slinging, an activity rarely associated with conventional femininity, and Obama because he was a man attacking a woman. However, Obama seemed to be much more adept, rhetorically, at answering back negative campaign attacks than Clinton.

When Obama was attacked, he often responded by attacking Clinton on the issue of truthfulness, an issue we have already seen as an important one when considering the voting behaviors of Clinton’s audience. Obama in the first South Carolina debate argued, “Truthfulness during campaigns makes a difference,” after being accused of working for a slumlord by Clinton (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 220). Later in this same debate, Obama complained, “I don’t mind having policy debates with Senator Clinton or Senator Edwards. But what I don’t enjoy is spending the week or two weeks or the last month having to answer to these kinds of criticisms that are not factually accurate” (para. 229). This attack strategy by Obama

was also evident in Cleveland: “Senator Clinton repeatedly claims that I don’t stand for universal health care. And, you know, for Senator Clinton to say that, I think, is simply not accurate” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 32). In answering Clinton’s attacks in this way, Obama diminished the premise of Clinton’s arguments against him by stating, simply, that her charges were untrue. Such a strategy not only defended Obama from the accusation, it also served to position Clinton in the unseemly role of a liar, doing whatever she could to discredit her opponents and serve her political ambition.

Clinton did not seem, for her part, as nuanced in dealing with attacks from her opponents. Indeed, each time Clinton would defend herself from an attack, she would use the rhetoric of defense to also attack her opponent. An exchange from the first debate in South Carolina illuminates this strategy:

Clinton: ...You know, if you look at the recent article about Senator Obama’s work on health care reform in the Illinois legislature, it’s a very interesting piece about how he basically did the bidding of the insurance companies during that effort.

Now, I’m just saying that if we’re going to...

Obama: That’s...

Clinton: ...be hurling these charges against one another, I’m used to taking in coming fire. I’ve taken it for 16 years. But when you get into this arena...

(APPLAUSE)

...you can’t expect to have a hands-off attitude about your record. And it is perfectly fair to have comparisons and contrasts. I voted against a 30—I voted for limiting to 30 percent what credit card companies could charge.

Senator Obama did not. That’s a fact (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para.

227-233).

During the Cleveland debate, Clinton attempted to use the same tactic in defending her health care proposal: “And what I find regrettable is that in Senator Obama’s mailing that he has sent out across Ohio, it is almost as though the health insurance companies and the Republicans wrote it” (The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 28). Thus, when Clinton would offer a defense against Obama’s attacks, she would offer her own attack in the same breath, mitigating the opportunity she had to let Obama’s attack strategies against her create a negative impression of the Illinois senator in the minds of her audience members. This strategy of providing “comparative messages”, though seemingly less directly attacking, has still been labeled as a negative attack by several scholars in the field (Pfau & Kenski, 1990; Salmore & Salmore, 1985). “*Comparative messages*, which some consultants feel are less distasteful to voters, move away from purely negative attacks on the opponent. They look instead at the record of the two candidates, to the advantage of one of them” (in Pfau & Kenski, 1990, p. 2). Clinton’s tactic, thus, was seemingly designed to limit the perception that she was, indeed, engaging in negative campaigning. However, such a strategy is still an attack strategy, and as such, it ran counter to the principles of Campbell’s (1989; 1998) feminine style, as well as the dominant cultural prescriptions expected of women offered by countless scholars in Chapter One, as she engaged in typically masculine strategies of attacking her opponent and exhibiting machismo. In doing so, Clinton neglected an opportunity to counter the audience’s negative impressions of her through her debate rhetoric.

Obama on the other hand seemed to have an ability for mitigating charges of negative campaigning—in essence, of appearing to be ‘the nice guy.’ Understanding the perception that his race against Clinton had gotten too negative, Obama was quick to point out in his first debate

against only Clinton that "...I was friends with Hillary Clinton before we started this campaign; I will be friends with Hillary Clinton after this campaign is over... we're running a competitive race, but it's because we both love this country, and we believe deeply in the issues that are at stake" ("Transcript of Thursday's," 2008, para. 11-13). It should be noted that Hillary Clinton failed to seize this particular opportunity to follow Obama's words with kind words of her own. Later in this same debate, when Obama had once again attacked her for her initial support of the Iraq war, Clinton attempted to deflect the attack weakly and only indirectly:

Obama: ...I will offer a clear contrast [during the general election] as somebody who never supported this war, thought it was a bad idea. I don't want to just end the war, but I want to end the mindset that got us into the war in the first place. That's the kind of leadership I'm going to provide as president of the United States.

(APPLAUSE)

Clinton: And of course...

Bitzer: Senator Clinton, that's a clear swipe at you.

Clinton: Really?

(LAUGHTER)

Clinton: We're having—we're having such a good time.

Obama: I wouldn't call that a swipe.

Clinton: We're having such a good time. We are. We are. We're having a wonderful time.

Obama: Yes, absolutely (para. 428-438).

Clinton's response to the attack rang hollow; she even somewhat denied being attacked, and claimed (contrary to the tone the debate had clearly taken), that it was an enjoyable experience.

Cleary, as evident in other debate situations, Clinton was not as adept at responding to charges of negative campaigning. At the beginning of the Cleveland debate, a video clip of Clinton at a press conference was shown wherein Clinton lambasted Obama: “(From videotape) So shame on you, Barack Obama. It is time you ran a campaign consistent with your messages in public. That’s what I expect from you. Meet me in Ohio. Let’s have a debate about your tactics... (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 2). Clinton’s response to the video clip being shown was simple and vague: “Well, this is a contested campaign” (para. 5). During this same debate, Clinton was asked about another infamous video clip showing Clinton at a campaign rally mocking Obama’s penchant for eloquent speech making and unifying audience members—a speech act considered humorous, but clearly one that also had a negative undercurrent. On the videotape, Clinton stated, “Now I could stand up here and say: Let’s just get everybody together. Let’s get unified. The sky will open—(laughter)—the light will come down—(laughter)—celestial choirs will be singing—(laughter)—and everyone will know we should do the right thing, and the world will be perfect!” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 185). Clinton, when pressed for comment during the debate about this clip, remarked, “Well, I was having a little fun. You know, it’s hard to find time to have fun on the campaign trail, but occasionally you can sneak that in” (para. 202). Herein was a unique opportunity to clearly argue against one of Obama’s key strengths—eloquent speech making—and offer an alternative by demonstrating substance on a key issue or two. Instead, Clinton’s response seemed abashed—as if she had been caught making fun of someone behind his back, and thus, had needed to offer an apology for doing so despite the fact that such tactics are now commonplace campaign strategies.

One of the overall impressions created by Obama for voters during the debates was the impression that Clinton was, indeed, engaged in negative campaigning—almost inundating voters with negative attacks against him. Obama argued, “But I think it’s very important to understand the context of all of this, and that is that Senator Clinton has—her campaign, at least—has constantly sent out negative attacks on us, e-mail, robocalls, flyers, television ads, radio calls” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 21). Obama repeated this sentiment later in the same debate during a back-and-forth discussion between the candidates when Clinton failed to yield the floor; Obama’s response was simple: “I’m going to get filibustered—I’m getting filibustered a little bit here” (para. 55). Such a tactic was not without merit, seemingly, given the following exchange shortly thereafter wherein Clinton failed to yield the floor to either Obama or the moderator, Brian Williams:

Mr. Williams: Senator [Clinton], I’m going to change the subject.

Sen. Clinton: About 20 percent of—about 20 percent of the people who are uninsured have the means to buy insurance. They’re often young people—

Mr. Williams: Senator—

Sen. Clinton: --who think they’re immortal—

Sen. Obama: Which is why I cover them.

Sen. Clinton:--except when the illness or the accident strikes. And what Senator Obama has said, than then, once you get to the hospital, you’ll be forced to buy insurance, I don’t think that’s a good idea. We ought to plan for it—

Sen. Obama: With respect—

Sen. Clinton: --and ought to make sure we cover everyone. That is the only way to get universal health care coverage.

Sen. Obama: With respect—

Sen. Clinton: That is what I've worked for for 15 years—

Sen. Obama: With respect—

Sen. Clinton: --and I believe that we can achieve it. But if we don't even have a plan to get there, and we start out by leaving people, you'll never ever control costs, improve quality, and cover everyone (para. 62-74).

Obama came off during this exchange as someone, offering respect for Clinton's views, who simply wanted the opportunity to speak, while Clinton came off as domineering—either too defensive to allow a competing view to be offered or too concerned that the competing message would resonate with viewers. Clinton's approach here embodied one of the negative stereotypes of women leaders—that they can be too controlling or too defensive when challenged by a man (Beck, 2001; Palmer & Simon, 1996; Rosenthal, 1998a). Obama, for his part, never had a moment like this during the debates analyzed in this study. Thus, throughout the debates, a clear contrast was established: Obama was adept at offering and countering negative attacks while Clinton, at least in terms of presenting positive female leadership traits, was not.

The myriad instances of negative campaigning during the debates provided a tangible problem for Clinton in terms of her audience. Given the numerous examples of attacks from Clinton, it is difficult to believe that her attempts to ameliorate the subsequent negative reactions of voters could be established. Clinton did try, however, to do just that. In her last debate with Obama, Clinton asserted, "...I think what's important is that we all listen to one another and we respect one another and we understand the different decisions that people make in life, because we're a stronger country because of that" ("Democratic Debate in Philadelphia," 2008, para. 53). Later in this final debate of the Democratic primary season, Clinton further asserted, "And as

president, I will work to try to bridge this divide [over, in this specific case, liberal and conservative views on gun control], which I think has been polarizing and, frankly, doesn't reflect the common sense of the American people (para. 300). It is important to keep in mind that these benign comments were undercut just minutes later when Clinton, once again, brought up criticism against Obama because of his associations with his former pastor, Reverend Wright, the endorsement Obama received from the socially divisive Reverend Farrakhan (who also had ties to Wright), and the convicted terrorist and known Obama associate, William Ayers. On the subject of Reverend Farrakhan's connection with Obama's pastor, specifically, Clinton was blunt in her use of negative attacks:

It is clear that, as leaders, we have a choice who we associate with and who we apparently give some kind of seal of approval to. And I think that it wasn't only the specific remarks, but some of the relationships with Reverend Farrakhan, with giving the church bulletin over to the leader of Hamas to put a message in. You know, these are problems, and they raise questions in people's minds. And so this is a legitimate area, as everything is when we run for office, for people to be exploring and trying to find answers (para. 118-119).

Such attacks hardly seem to be in keeping with one of Clinton's parting lines in this debate:

"And [when I'm president] we're going to make everybody feel like they're part of the American family again" (para. 374). Thus, while Clinton needed to overcome her use of negative attacks during the campaign—through negative ads, mailings, and robocalls—through her use of rhetoric, she failed to do so in an articulate or successful manner during her key speeches and debate performances.

It is incredibly rare to find any politician running for office who does not use negative campaigning in some fashion. It could be assumed, then, that as Hillary Clinton pursued the presidency, she too would have used such tactics. However, given what we know about audience perceptions regarding Clinton (that she was unlikable, lacking warmth, and overtly masculine in some of her behaviors), and what we know about our culture's expectations and constraints for women, it seems that Clinton was once again caught in a tangible double bind. To attract voters Clinton needed to present herself as warm and approachable; however, if she were to direct her rhetoric to this primary goal, she could have been perceived as weak and lacking the qualities Americans associate with the presidency. Thus, yet again, Clinton was derided for engaging in behaviors common to men seeking the presidency. Furthermore, on a basic rhetorical level, Clinton seemed less adept at responding to the criticism leveled against her campaign for negative attack strategies than Barack Obama.

Clinton's Appeals to Super Delegates

A final mediator of change that Clinton appealed to in her rhetoric during the campaign were the so-called "super delegates"—elected leaders and party officials who received their own nominating votes at the convention. Clinton's appeals to these delegates was sporadic but steady, especially as the race for the nomination began to span months and she and Obama began to split more and more of the popular vote.

Initially, the targeting of super delegates occurred often through Clinton's surrogates and campaign staff rather than from the candidate herself. Before Super Tuesday, it was widely reported that super delegates were among the audience members who were going to be targeted by Clinton's rhetoric (Balz, 2008; Balz & Craig, 2008). Obama's advisers, for their part, recognized that, at least early on, Clinton had held an edge with these super delegates, but

dismissed the importance of this part of the audience by asserting that “super delegates will fall in line behind the effective winners of the primary battle,” opting instead to keep focused on securing the popular vote (Balz, 2008, para. 25).

In many ways, Clinton’s attention to the super delegates in her audience was wise; even after the prolonged nomination battle extended into April, Clinton, while falling just short of even with Obama in the popular vote, still maintained a slight edge among committed super delegates (Leibovich, 1008). The problems created by this particular segment of Clinton’s audience, though, were clear. If Obama had won the popular vote but lost the nomination, this would have signaled doubts about the veracity of Clinton’s nomination, and might have compelled voters to have believed their wishes were being overlooked in favor of the views of party insiders. Probably wise to this perception, Obama argued in May, 2008, “Super delegates understandably would prefer not to be seen as the deciding factor...I think they respect the process...” (Murray & Bacon, Jr., 2008, para. 4). Still, Clinton pressed her case until the last primary races in early June believing that these party insiders would recognize that her last-minute wins in the waning days of the primaries “[demonstrated] that she would be the more electable candidate in November” (Murray & Kornblut, 2008, para. 3). Indeed, during these final days of the campaign, Clinton focused almost exclusively on persuading super delegates to support her (Murray & Kornblut, 2008).

On the other hand, Clinton’s focus on super delegates throughout the campaign raised old doubts about the private, back-room politics perception engendered by the Clintons. As one voter, David Sizemore of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, put it: “The existence of “super delegates” in the Democratic Party sounds undemocratic to me...Listening to members of Congress talk about their intent to vote for a candidate, despite the contrary wishes of their constituents, is

questionable. It sounds like a ‘good ole boys’ club fraught with possibilities for manipulating the system for personal or party agendas” (“‘Super delegates’ undermine,” 2008, para. 1-2). Thus, appealing directly to this particular part of her audience complicated her relationship with the average voters, and if nothing else, presented a challenge to her abilities to rally Democrats during the general election due to fears of back-room politicking.

Still, targeting her rhetoric, at least indirectly, to super delegates was a necessary evil for Clinton. It was necessary because of her failure to secure a solid lead in the primaries and caucuses; thus, she was compelled to target the only audience left to persuade in order to push herself over the edge. It was an ‘evil’ because appealing to a demographic outside the bounds of average voters forced her to shift her focus and engender less of a populist message—where she had started the campaign. Being forced to target this group specifically compelled Clinton to adopt messages that defied the sharing of power paradigm engendered by successful women leaders that Han (2003) contended was key for women, and violated the tenets of “integrative leadership” that Rosenthal (1998a) argued was crucial for women to adopt in order to provide a counter-point to conventional male leadership.

In terms of Clinton’s key speeches and debate performances during the primary campaign, the exact terminology of “super delegates” was never mentioned—evidence of a split in Clinton’s rhetorical focus, and of the potential dangers for Clinton that were associated with courting this specific voting bloc. Because super delegates held a large part in determining the nomination regardless of the wishes of voters, Clinton realized that she could not, publicly, overtly feature this subject in her key rhetorical acts. On the other hand, she was cognizant of their importance and attempted to speak to these audience members in a more indirect manner. Indeed, the subject of courting party leaders and elected officials to vote for her candidacy at the

convention was never present at all in the key campaign speeches featured in this study.

However, there were a few specific instances wherein Clinton arguably was courting this specific aspect of her audience when debating Obama.

The campaign speeches examined in this study were, again, virtually bereft of specific appeals to super delegates, beyond implicit messages, like those after her comeback win in New Hampshire wherein Clinton vowed, "...we're going to rally on and make our case. We are in it for the long run" (Clinton, 2008a, para. 6). Comments like this one could just as easily have been made in response to the shifting dynamic of the primary season, instead of reminding super delegates that she was, indeed, in the campaign until the very end, pressing them to make up their minds regarding their vote at the conventions. Still, the language featured in this speech also made it clear that Clinton, her campaign and the citizens who voted for her, had to make a case to some aspect of her audience beyond average voters that her candidacy was sound, implying that she was not just speaking to citizen voters alone.

In the later debate performances where only she and Obama took part, however, Clinton's rhetoric seemed to be more overt in making a case for her candidacy among uncommitted super delegates. In the first of these debates featuring the last two candidates, after one of the questioners asked for Clinton's response to Ted and Caroline Kennedy's endorsement of Obama, Clinton remarked:

...despite the enthusiasm of our supporters and endorsers...this is about the two of us. You have to, as voters, determine who you think can be the best president, to tackle all those problems on day one, waiting in the Oval Office, who can be the best nominee for the Democratic Party to be able to withstand whatever they decide to throw at us on the other side of the aisle, and come out victorious...Neither one of us

would have predicted—you know, not very long ago—we would be sitting here. And it is a great tribute to the Democratic Party and to America (“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 345-352).

By placing special emphasis on the general election strategy the Democratic Party would face, and in addressing the Party specifically rather than individual voters alone, Clinton was arguably targeting super delegates specifically and attempting to demonstrate her own resilience over her less experienced opponent in terms of the general election. But later in this same debate, she seemed to have mitigated her possible sway among super delegates, possibly trying to allay fears among citizens that she was a party insider who would eventually be elected solely on the basis of her ties to super delegates: “...what’s great about our political system is that we are all judged on our own merits. We come forward to the American public and it’s the most grueling political process one can imagine. We start from the same place. Nobody has an advantage no matter who you are or where you came from. You have to raise money. You have to make the case for yourself” (para. 383-384). These comments specifically showed the precarious challenge posed by these divergent audience groups for Clinton’s rhetoric. It was almost as if it was a no-win situation for Clinton; she had to address the party leaders and elected officials because Obama was leading among primary and caucus voters, but at the same time, doing so directly would have potentially increased the divide between Clinton and the general electorate.

In later debates, Clinton, while still not directly mentioning her attempts to persuade super delegates, seemed to draw more and more negative contrasts between herself and Obama, foreshadowing the inevitable attacks against the Illinois senator from conservatives during the general election. These were similar strategies already mentioned in the previous section on negative attacks. However, Clinton’s rhetoric detailing how she would be the stronger candidate

compared to Obama bears new analysis in terms of the potential influence such attacks may have had on super delegate voters. In the debate between Clinton and Obama in Cleveland, as already mentioned, Clinton attacked Obama's ties to both Farrakhan and Reverend Wright and their (alleged, at least in the case of the latter) anti-Semitic views. One particular tussle between Tim Russert and Clinton shed light on Clinton's tactics in courting super delegates:

Clinton: ...I was willing to take that stand, and, you know, fortunately the people of New York supported me and I won. But at the time, I thought it was more important to stand on principle and to reject the kind of conditions that went with support like that.

Russert: Are you suggesting Senator Obama is not standing on principle?

Clinton: No. I'm just saying that you asked specifically if he would reject [support from Wright and Farrakhan]. And there's a difference between denouncing and rejecting. And I think when it comes to this sort of, you know, inflammatory—I have no doubt that everything that Barack just said is absolutely sincere. But I just think, we've got to be even stronger. We cannot let anyone in any way say these things because of the implications that they have, which can be so far reaching ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 229-231).

The last part of Clinton's comment seemed the most telling in terms of appealing to super delegates, a group ultimately concerned about the party's chances in November. This rhetoric signaled that Clinton may be more cognizant of the need to shore up support for Democrats among Jewish voters for the general election (an audience that Obama had potentially marginalized with his lack of rejecting Wright and Farrakhan) and thus, that she would have been in a better position to rally the entire party given Obama's alleged associations.

Clinton continued this strategy of making negative attacks on Obama in the final debate by, again, pointing out Obama's association with William Ayers. Clinton commented, after the attack was made, "I know Senator Obama's a good man and I respect him greatly but I think this is an issue that certainly the Republicans will be raising. And it goes to this larger set of concerns about, you know, how we are going to run against John McCain" ("Democratic Debate in Philadelphia," 2008, para. 159-160). The general election seemed foremost on Clinton's mind during this final debate of the primary season, and she consciously raised the questions several times, making the case that she would be a far stronger candidate than Obama, seemingly regardless of the amount of primaries and caucuses he had won, and thus, it was she who should have had the support of super delegates. Earlier in the debate, she similarly argued:

...what is important is that we understand exactly the challenges facing us in order to defeat Senator McCain. He will be a formidable candidate. There isn't any doubt about that. He has a great American story to tell...But I also know, having now gone through 16 years of being on the receiving end of what the Republican Party dishes out, how important it is that we try to go after every single voter everywhere we possibly can to get to those electoral votes that we're going to need to have the next president elected (para. 59-61).

When she was pressed for clarification by George Stephanopoulos on whether or not Obama was indeed qualified to run in the general election, Clinton reinforced her central message for her audience, super delegate or not: "I think I am better able and better prepared in large measure because of what I've been through and the work that I've done and the results I've produced for people and the coalition that I have put together in this campaign..." (para. 64). In the end, both Clinton and Obama recognized the decision that would seal Obama's fate as the nominee for the

Democratic Party, and both campaigns acknowledged that there would, in fact, be enough super delegate support to push Obama over the top in delegates (Nagourney, et al., 2008).

Clinton's rhetoric that indirectly spoke to super delegates was, in hindsight, yet another example of how Clinton was unable to adequately address her audience through her campaign discourse. As with her failure to address the women's voting bloc sufficiently, Clinton was also unable to effectively court the super delegate vote openly in her campaign speeches and debates. To do so would have signaled clearly to voters who had not yet voted in primaries and caucuses that Clinton was doing anything she had to in order to win, and thus, would have further alienated her audience by not continuing the 'conversation' with voters, and by playing the 'back room politics' game. And while this may not overtly seem like an issue uniquely associated with Clinton's gender, it can be argued that it was, considering the advice for effective female leadership that has been previously articulated. Had Clinton overtly courted the super delegate vote, she would have defied the expectations for cooperative leadership and the feminine rhetorical style by purposefully cutting out one segment of her audience. Male politicians, who have the latitude to be 'mavericks' (John McCain) or 'deciders' (George W. Bush), have not seemed nearly as constrained in how they have approached political campaigns, or addressed specific audiences. As such, Clinton's attempt to appeal to super delegates had to be more indirect, because of the intangible but ultimately concrete double bind she faced as a female presidential contender.

Chapter Summary

The audience aspect of Clinton's rhetorical situation was, indeed, complex. And in the end, it is clear that she failed to sufficiently address her audience in a way that would have motivated them to enact change by voting for Clinton. Clinton's political celebrity, while it was

initially helpful to her chances, seemed to alienate her from average citizens, and she was never able to adequately address this issue to her advantage in her campaign discourse. Additionally, because she was so well known, and much of what citizens ‘knew’ about Clinton was negative in terms of her gender, Clinton faced an uphill battle in persuading audience members to believe that she was warm and feminine enough to serve as their nominee, evidence of the palpable double bind facing women who are culturally expected to demonstrate feminine traits all the while proving their toughness as political candidates. Clinton possibly could have mitigated this effect had she targeted specific voting blocs (women, young people, etc.). But her penchant for clumsy negative campaigning and a lack of direct rhetorical response to the sexism on the campaign trail further separated her from those voters who could have saved her chances.

Finally, the presence of super delegates during the campaign—a part of Clinton’s audience who also could have helped secure her nomination—also created problems for her rhetorical strategies because targeting such an elite group could have further marginalized citizen voters and defied conventional expectations of female leaders. Still, she could not have ignored this group because they held sway over the vote, and also because news media sources ran countless stories during the campaign highlighting the significance of this voting bloc. Thus, in terms of attracting the support of super delegates, Clinton’s rhetorical choices were limited, which caused her to only appeal to these party leaders and elected officials in indirect terms. In short, Clinton failed to successfully connect with her various specific audiences, and further marginalized some voters, through her insufficient use of rhetoric, seemingly a lack of awareness about the true nature of her rhetorical situation during the campaign, and the double binds that constrain the rhetorical choices of political women.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Clinton's Exigencies

Bitzer (1968) regarded the rhetorical exigence as “an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be” (p. 6). An exigence, considered rhetorically, is a problem that needs to be solved via rhetoric—in this case, rhetoric from Hillary Clinton during her campaign for the Democratic nomination for president in 2008. From Bitzer's point of view, a rhetor will focus on the establishment of an exigence and the remedy for the exigence as presented through the rhetor's discourse. Thus, the rhetor can establish the defects that are problems the rhetor and audience must solve together, and such positive modifications of these problems can be accomplished through, or aided by, the rhetor's discourse. On the other hand, an exigence may also exist outside of the rhetorical act, but can be solved through rhetoric by discussing such problems and then constructing solutions with the audience. This assessment of the power and purposes of rhetoric is bolstered by Campbell (1972) who argued that rhetoric is inherently “propositional” and “problem solving” (p. 2-3).

The creation and presentation of a problem for the rhetor is fundamental to persuasive discourse, and thus, certainly relevant for campaign discourse. Campbell (1972) clarified that these exigencies may be loosely described “as the difference between what is and what is wanted and what exists” (p. 2-3). Thus, for Clinton, her central problem was establishing herself as a viable candidate worthy of her party's nomination and the votes of citizens. But the rhetorical construction of the exigence does more than merely state the obvious for audiences. Campbell contended that the exigencies are established by a rhetor's “attempts to structure or restructure the perceptions and attitudes of [her] audience through [her] use of language. In other words one reason why persuasion is possible is that language has the capacity to name, categorize, define,

and evaluate; and among the most important rhetorical stratagems are the techniques the rhetorician uses to change the verbal behavior of this audience” (p. 8). Thus, in considering the rhetorical exigencies within a body of discourse, the problems that rhetors assert need resolution are rhetorically created in such a way as to attract the attention and action of audience members. For Clinton, this problem went beyond her simply attracting support for her candidacy and as becomes clear in the following pages, requires closer inspection.

While Bitzer does argue that there may be many problems addressed within one or a series of speeches, there are usually only a small number of exigencies pointed out by rhetors. Bitzer (1968) stated, “in any rhetorical situation there will be at least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle; it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected” (p. 7). Still, when addressing the rhetoric for an entire campaign, several exigencies were established through Clinton’s use of campaign discourse and, indeed, the presentation of her chances via news media sources. These exigencies, those created by Clinton and those created via other sources, created a series of double binds that greatly impeded Clinton’s campaign rhetoric. Initially, Clinton had to address the omnipresent double bind as a woman running for president. As indicated previously in Chapter Three, Clinton rarely mentioned her status as a *female* presidential candidate, despite the fact that, because Americans have never had a woman president, this was a unique issue that she had to address rhetorically in a carefully strategic way. After all, as the following analysis demonstrates, Clinton tried to take advantage of some of the positive elements of running as a woman, but could not use her status as a woman as the sole basis for attracting voters. Nor could Clinton effectively utilize her gender to her benefit because of the popular perceptions among voters and news media outlets that she was not, and has rarely been, conventionally feminine. Thus, Clinton attempted to

display more dominantly masculine attributes, such as strength and toughness, to prove her viability, but this again forced her to craft her messages to reflect traditional femininity—a feat that she failed at in myriad ways. The analysis also reflects the fact that Clinton faced other double binds, in terms of her initial support for Bush’s pre-emptive war in Iraq, and as she struggled to convince voters that she was, indeed, the best candidate to beat Republicans in a general election race. In sum, analysis of Clinton’s rhetorical exigencies confirms the tangible double binds women face in running for high elective office.

Specifically, there were four dominant exigencies created by or addressed by Clinton’s key speeches and debate performances: The historic nature of Clinton’s candidacy, Clinton’s policy for universal health care, Clinton’s stance on the war in Iraq, and Clinton’s chances in the general election. As the following analysis indicates, each of these exigencies constrained Clinton’s rhetoric in terms of her gender, and as such, each are reflective of the double binds faced by female politicians.

The Historic Nature of the Campaign as Exigence

Early on in the campaign, the press made more of an issue out of the historic nature of Clinton’s candidacy than Clinton did with her own rhetoric. Clinton was, after all, not the first woman to run for president, nor was she the first to attempt a run representing a major political party. But, as previously noted, from the outset of the campaign, Clinton was the first woman to run as a perceived front-runner. As such, many Americans, including Clinton herself on rare occasions, labeled her potential win of the presidency as breaking “the highest and hardest glass ceiling” (Kantor, 2008b, para. 8). Because of this possible historic feat, the press added special emphasis to Clinton’s chances of representing the Democratic Party in her bid for the presidency.

From the very beginning, the press was clear in conveying the potential importance of Clinton's candidacy, as well as Obama's. Steinberg and Elder (2008) wrote in *The New York Times* that the Democratic primary race was a "convergence of two historical candidacies, those of a woman and an African-American" (para. 3-4). A *Washington Post* article noted, "Hillary Rodham Clinton yesterday launched a long-anticipated 2008 presidential campaign that could make her the first female president in the nation's history and the only former first lady to follow her husband in the White House" (Balz, 2007b, para. 1). Dan Balz, this article's author, went on to report later that the historic nature of Clinton's candidacy, according to her campaign staff, could prove beneficial for her chances: "Campaign officials also believe that Clinton's potential for making history as the nation's first female president will give the campaign added energy, a talking point emphasized in a memo sent to supporters yesterday. 'In particular, younger generation women believe it's time we have our first woman president and believe Hillary is the right choice,' the memo states" (para. 22). However, as demonstrated in the previous chapter analyzing this specific section of Clinton's audience, Clinton's support among these voters was all but non-existent, possibly because Clinton herself was wary of including appeals regarding the historic nature of her candidacy in her campaign rhetoric. Regardless, the historic nature of the race, as painted in the press, continued. After Super Tuesday, *The USA Today* noted, "two democrats stood on the doorstep of history...both likely to emerge from the 22-state spectacle with enough wins and delegates to continue their quests to become the first female or African-American presidential nominee of a major party" (para. 1).

While running as the first female front-runner for her major party's nomination had potential benefits for Clinton, it also served as somewhat of a distraction in press reports, indicating the nature of one of the key double binds she faced in her rhetorical situation. An

excerpt from a January 2007 article in *The Washington Post* illustrated the intimate, diffused reports that have haunted women running for high elective office in the past that also plagued Clinton:

Unlike other candidates...whose videos might have been produced by a guy with a cellphone camera, Clinton's announcement was a veritable showpiece of Hollywood-style set design, lighting and cinematography. While Clinton, looking radiant in a red jacket and flattering makeup, affected the demeanor of a kaffe-klatching neighbor while speaking about the Iraq War, energy, Social Security and health care, the camera swung with pendular subtlety between a background tableaux of framed family pictures and a fabulous table lamp exuding a warm glow. In fact, the background is so eye-catching, so crowded with totemic details, so bursting with semiotic potential, that I missed whole passages of Clinton's statement the first time around. (And yes, I do want that lamp) (Hornaday, 2007, para. 4).

And while this passage was not negative toward Clinton's candidacy, it conveyed a common theme among news stories about political women—the penchant for focusing on intimate, seemingly irrelevant details while ignoring the more salient issues espoused by female politicians (Bystrom, et al., 2004; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Han, 2003; Witt, et al., 1994). Clinton, because of the negative perceptions among voters and news media sources regarding her lack of femininity, needed to present her candidacy in a more intimate tone, to essentially put her femininity on display. This initial speech act announcing her candidacy dispelled the beliefs that Clinton was unlikeable and lacking warmth or the ability to address average citizen voters in conversational ways. Unfortunately, a rhetorical act like this, because it conjured such feminine images, was risky in that it reminded potential voters that Clinton was a woman who was running for the most

masculine of elective political offices. Thus, in presenting her initial campaign speech in this way, Clinton needed to combat the negative images that a woman could not serve as president through her campaign rhetoric. And as is discussed later in this section, this was something that Clinton failed to do adequately in addressing this specific exigence.

Additionally, when the press did discuss Clinton's views on the historical nature of her candidacy, it did so in a way that featured the doubts that surrounded her assuming the role of president. Kiely (2007) stated, "Though Clinton said she is 'sure there still are' doubts in the minds of some voters about whether to make a woman the nation's chief executive, she believes that her gender is more of a plus than a minus" (para. 3). Other press sources were direct in featuring such doubts, especially after the New Hampshire "crying" incident described in depth in Chapter Three. Maureen Dowd (2008) wrote after Clinton's New Hampshire win:

When I walked into the office Monday, people were all clustered around a computer to watch what they thought they would never see: Hillary Clinton with the unmistakable look of tears in her eyes. A woman gazing at the screen was grimacing, saying it was bad. Three guys watched it over and over, drawn to the 'humanized' Hillary. One reporter who covers security issues cringed. 'We are at war,' he said. 'Is this how she'll talk to Kim Jong-Il?' Another reporter joked: 'That crying really seemed genuine. I'll bet she spent hours thinking about it beforehand.' He added dryly: 'Crying doesn't usually work in campaigns. Only in relationships' (para. 1-3).

Similar statements were present in Kantor's (2008a) article for *The New York Times* after Clinton's New Hampshire win:

'If she is breaking down now, before winning her party's nomination, then how would

she act under pressure as president?’ Mark Mayfield, 52, a sales manager in Nashville who supported Barack Obama’s nomination, wrote in a post on nytimes.com. As if in reply, Katha Pollitt wrote on thenation.com that the spectacle of Mrs. Clinton misting over brought up “the oldest, dumbest canard about women: they’re too emotional to hold power’ (para. 7-8).

From these brief excerpts, we see a couple of issues related to the historical exigence of Clinton’s campaign. On one hand, gender stereotypes were rife throughout these reactions and comments (Clinton was being weak; she, as a woman, couldn’t handle the pressure; she, as a woman, probably couldn’t handle international leaders, etc.) On the other hand, we see some voters attempting to resist such stereotypes. Unfortunately, we know that it can be very difficult, if not impossible, for women to discuss gender during campaigns because of the ‘double bind’ women face. Because of this double bind, wherein voters expect women to display conventional femininity while these women politicians must, at the same time, convince voters they are masculine enough for the public, political sphere, it is ironic that Clinton won New Hampshire after such a feminine display of emotion. Such a display undoubtedly reminded voters of Clinton’s femininity, and thus, potential weakness (as indicated by the reactions following the display). Also, because voters and news reporters instantly began questioning the authenticity of Clinton’s display, it seems unusual that it propelled her to a win. However, given the amount of scholarship that has been focused on Clinton’s rhetorical performance of femininity (or lack thereof), her win after such an emotional display makes more sense. Countless studies have concluded that one of the key barriers between Clinton and voters, as is discussed throughout the present study, has been a perceived lack of warmth, genuine emotion, and sincerity on Clinton’s part (Anderson, 2002; Corrigan, 2000; Dubriwny, 2005; Gardetto, 1997; Kelly, 2001; Mattina,

2005; Parry-Giles, 2000; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002; Trent & Short-Thompson, 2003; Wertheimer, 2005). As such, when Clinton made such a display of emotion, however sincere or disingenuous, it was striking for voters because it was completely uncharacteristic for Clinton, even if it was fleeting. Thus, within this single situation was a prime example of a double bind faced by Clinton: the absence of emotion on Clinton's part alienated her from voters; yet when she displayed emotion, Clinton began to embody stereotypical female weakness in the minds of some voters and pundits, undercutting her credibility as a candidate.

Having seen the ways in which women politicians before her had been treated by the press, Clinton, rhetorically speaking, adopted a strategy of neglecting the historic nature of her candidacy for the majority of the campaign. In fact, she only mentioned her gender (or gender at all) sporadically. In Iowa, Clinton featured gender as an issue in only a small portion of her lengthy speech; she reminded the crowd of one of her popular speeches in Beijing while she was First Lady, stating, "women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights. It's not only what we believe, here in our country, it's what we know is important for our national security" (Clinton, 2007b, para. 27). She went on to note, "...when I am president I will continue to make the changes on behalf of women that are good and right for women and smart for American security" (para. 27). Her final words in this speech also reminded the audience of the historical nature of her candidacy, but only through implication; Clinton stated: "Let's make history together" (para. 52). However, it seemed as if Clinton in addressing gender, possibly aware of the political pitfalls associated with such a move, did so only in juxtaposition with an inherently masculine issue, national security. In doing so, Clinton's rhetoric in this speech typified the double bind facing female politicians. Again, while she could not directly persuade her audience to vote for her because she was a woman, and that she would be making history

with her successful nomination, she had to appeal to the historic nature of her campaign through language befitting a male candidate, namely the appeal that she was strong on national security.

Clinton would neglect the historical exigence completely in her key campaign speeches until her speech after Super Tuesday, when again, she refused to make her gender an explicit barrier to her candidacy. Clinton stated, early on in this speech, “Tonight, in record numbers, you voted to not just make history—but to remake America” (para. 4). This statement reflected the general tone of her campaign speech rhetoric in terms of gender—hint at the historical nature, but immediately reframe the issue into something else. Both she and Barack Obama represented historical milestones with their respective candidacies. But Clinton, like Obama with his race, knew that she could not frame her gender as a central reason for voters to nominate her for president. After all, neither would be able to persuade voters who were overtly sexist or racist in their personal views. But it seems that Clinton, more so than Obama, had greater difficulty with this particular exigence, and I contend that this was due to Clinton’s gender. Since, as discussed in detail in Chapter One, the presidency and most political positions are gender-coded masculine, Obama seemed to have much more freedom than Clinton in choosing his rhetorical strategies. Clinton, on the other hand, not only had to deal with her particular set of political baggage, she also had to convince voters that she was representative of historical change while, at the same time, she convinced voters that she was not so different that she lacked the experience to be president and also that she did not represent revolutionary change that may have scared voters away. Truly, in terms of the particular rhetorical exigence presented by the historical nature of Clinton’s campaign, the gendered double bind was omnipresent in Clinton’s rhetorical situation.

Clinton similarly refused to make the historical nature of her candidacy a part of her debate rhetoric, rarely bringing up the issue at all unless pressed by a specific question. The issue

was not mentioned at all during the first debate in South Carolina, and only twice in her debate with John Edwards and Barack Obama. During this debate Clinton revealed a way of dealing with this exigence that would soon become a pattern; she would acknowledge her historical campaign intertwined with the historical candidacy of Barack Obama, attempting to seemingly diffuse her own significance as a woman running for president. Clinton noted, “You know, this campaign is obviously an incredible opportunity for so many people to become involved, to be part of making history. You’ve got a son of the South. You’ve got an African-American. You have a woman. What better way to celebrate the legacy of Dr. King than to look at this stage right here tonight?” (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 545-546). The only other time she brought her gender up in any way during this debate was after Obama mentioned pay equality—the lack of parity among different races and between men and women—to which Clinton added:

...the challenge is for us to address all of these issues. We obviously still have problems of gender equality. You know, equal pay is not yet equal...A woman makes \$0.77 on a dollar and women of color make \$0.67. So there is a big agenda waiting for the Democratic Party. And we feel so passionately about this because we not only are running for office, but we each, in our own way, have lived it. We have seen it. We have understood the pain and the injustice that has come because of race, because of gender. And it’s imperative that, as we move forward with our campaign, we make it very clear that each of us will address these issues (para. 569-571).

By talking about gender in this way (by sublimating it to race, by talking about it generally and not personally, and by constantly using pronouns such as ‘we’ instead of ‘I’), Clinton’s rhetorical choices served to distance herself and her candidacy from her gender.

Clinton's rhetoric dealing with her gender was similarly obfuscating in her first solo debate against Obama. Here, only one comment during the evening brought up her gender at all. Clinton, in the middle of the debate, noted, "What I think is exciting is that the way we are looking at the Democratic field, now down to the two of us is, is we're going to get big change. We're going to have change. I think having the first woman president would be a huge change for America and the world" ("Transcript of Thursday's Democratic," 2008, para. 344). Clinton, thus, once again missed an opportunity to discuss the implications of electing a woman as president, or to dwell in any way on the significance of electing a woman to the highest elected office in the United States. Instead, oddly enough, she once again lumped the historical significance of her own campaign in with Obama's to the point of adopting one of the key Obama monikers during the campaign: change.

Clinton, in her debate against Obama in Cleveland, used the same strategy—discussing her gender only once. In this case it was at the very end of the debate in her closing statement, when she once again linked the historic significance of her own candidacy with Obama's. Clinton stated:

As I said last week, you know, it's been an honor to campaign. I still intend to do everything I can to win, but it has been an honor, because it has been a campaign that is history making. You know, obviously I am thrilled to be running, to be the first woman president, which I think would be a sea change in our country and around the world, and would give enormous...you know, enormous hope and, you know, a real change to the way things have been done, and who gets to do them, and what the rules are. So I feel that either one of us will make history ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 304-308).

As evidenced by the transcript, it was clear that Clinton had tangible difficulties talking about the historical nature of her campaign as exigence—the number of “you know” comments is proof of this by itself. And again, as if to demonstrate that she was, indeed, not significantly different than Obama on this one issue alone, she undercut the significance of her historical campaign by admitting that Obama’s winning of the nomination would be just as significant. This strategy, once again, indicated the double bind plaguing Clinton’s candidacy. She, like Obama, obviously symbolized change. Yet Clinton had to temper the change her candidacy represented in order to not frighten voters because of the revolutionary nature of her candidacy, and because Clinton hoped to utilize her previous experiences in D.C. politics as an indication of her qualifications to be president (a constraint analyzed specifically in Chapter Five). As such, though Clinton attempted to couple the symbolic change that her campaign represented with Obama’s, it seemed less authentic, and more often than not, contradictory.

This rhetorical strategy of dismissing the historical exigence presented by her campaign was also evident in the final debate between Clinton and Obama. Gender, once again, was only brought up once. In this debate Clinton brought it up early on, as if to again potentially dismiss the significance. In her opening statement, Clinton stated, “...we meet here tonight in Philadelphia where our founding fathers determined that the promise of America would be available for future generations if we were able to make it happen. You know, I am here, as is Senator Obama. Neither of us were included in those original documents. But in a very real sense, we demonstrate that that promise of America is alive and well” (“Democratic Debate in Philadelphia,” 2008, para. 7-8). This rhetoric is significant, and represents another of Clinton’s rhetorical strategies in dealing with this specific exigence: Clinton would deny that she was a victim of gender bias to prove that she was a capable and viable presidential candidate. As

discussed in Chapter Three, the women's vote was deeply divided during the Democratic primary in 2008. One could argue that, had Clinton made her gender an issue, or highlighted more the historic nature of her candidacy, she could have motivated a number of women to join her cause. However, given everything that we have seen in relation to the gendered double bind, and all of the information indicating the strong cultural perception of weakness among women, Clinton may have had no other choice but to downplay her gender as a factor in the primary. At the point Clinton acknowledged the historical significance of her candidacy as a woman, she would have crossed the line Bower (2003) discussed; she would have, to turn Bower's phrase, created a rhetorical sense of *revolution* instead of *evolution*. Thus, Clinton, while she was still able to compete for the nomination, had to be all but silent on this most central of issues.

This first exigence, as evident by Clinton's lackluster handling of the historic nature of her candidacy, was largely a product of forces within the rhetorical situation but outside of the purview of Clinton, herself (i.e. news media sources, perspectives and expectations of voters, etc.). But as Bitzer (1968) noted, key exigencies addressed within rhetorical situations are not just those created or perpetuated by forces outside of the rhetor; exigencies can also be presented and characterized by rhetors themselves to draw the audience's attention to important problems that must be solved. Though the campaign lasted for almost eighteen months and countless issues were brought up in various campaign communication sites, two key issues dominated the Democratic primary campaign in 2008, and were directly constructed as such by Clinton's own rhetoric. These most pivotal issues were universal health care and the war in Iraq. Tackling these two issues would seemingly have been a wise strategy. The discussion in Chapter One identified several issues that have been culturally coded as masculine or feminine, with war or national security issues serving as masculine issues and health care typically, though not always, coded as

feminine (Banwart, et al., 2003a; Banwart, et al., 2003b; Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bystrom, 2003a; Bystrom, 2004; Davis, 2003; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Palmer & Simon, 1996). By choosing to feature these issues, with almost equal frequency during her campaign, Clinton was seeking to embody the idea of the ‘sister mister’ which Clift and Brazaitis (2000) discussed as a potentially positive way to present a female candidate for president. By discussing health care, a topic that has long been associated with Clinton, she was able to champion a cause that was, perceptually, feminine. But by also focusing on establishing Iraq as a dominant exigence, Clinton was demonstrating the toughness or ‘presidential machismo’ seemingly required by the president of the United States (Han, 2003). However, as is already clear, Clinton was plagued by rhetorical double binds throughout her bid for the nomination, and these exigencies further reflect the extent to which Clinton’s rhetoric was constrained during her campaign. As such, the analysis now turns to focus attention on these exigencies that Clinton created to address the ways in which they problematized her success in persuading voters. The establishment of a universal health care system will be addressed first.

Clinton’s Health Care Exigence as Double Bind

Anyone who has followed Hillary Clinton’s career since her husband first took over the presidency understands that health care has always been an important issue for her. Because of Clinton’s interest and experience with the topic of universal health care, and because many of her Democratic opponents (particularly John Edwards) featured the establishment of health care reform among their policy objectives, Clinton chose to make this topic a cornerstone of her candidacy. The decision to feature health care reform as a priority on the trail was also tactical, given the polling data at key moments during the campaign that indicated health care was one of the most important issues to voters during the campaign, necessitating Clinton’s rhetorical

attention (Saad, 2008; Steinhauser, 2008a). During her campaign for president, Hillary Clinton rhetorically constructed George Bush personally, and Republicans generally, as key barriers to establishing meaningful health care reform. Early on in her campaign rhetoric, Clinton established universal health care as a crucial problem to be solved: "...I was very pleased that I could, in 1993, work with a lot of very knowledgeable people to try to bring universal health care to our country...I am very proud we tried because it was the right thing to do and now we are going to get it done when I become president..." (Clinton, 2007b, para. 26). Clinton did not simply list universal health care as a policy priority; she dwelt on this issue and provided details and stories to support the assertion that this was a vital goal and one that was opposed by Bush and like-minded Republicans. Clinton stated:

Everyday people come up to me with their problems. They tell me horror stories about insurance companies that reject their claims, about premiums going up so fast they can't possibly keep insurance for themselves and their families, about being without insurance, not able to afford the prescription drugs and the treatment their doctors say they need...The stories I hear, the personal acquaintances and friends that I have convince me that nothing other than health care for everyone should be the standard...I don't want to leave anybody out. I am not running for president to put band-aids on this problem. I am running for president to solve it (Clinton, 2007b, para. 33-34).

Who had been putting band-aids on problems like these? For Clinton, the answer was obvious: Bush, and like-minded Republicans, because "Under this president, all of [our] hard work has been squandered" (Clinton, 2007b, para. 40). Though Clinton was not specific in detailing the hard work that had been squandered, she was likely referring to the reforms the Clinton administration had put in place after the push for universal health care failed in the early nineties

(i.e. Bush's limiting of coverage offered by the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2007, a policy Bill Clinton's administration put into effect in the mid nineties) (Lee, 2007). Indeed, throughout her early speeches (before 2008), Clinton blamed Bush for a host of issues beyond Iraq and health care, including the economic downturn, the failure of the No Child Left Behind Act, a 'war' against scientific research, banning stem cell research, and several other issues that would resonate well among Democratic voters. But when assessing the amount of time spent on each of these issues and the number of details adding fuel to the rhetorical fire of Clinton's exigencies, it is clear that Iraq and health care were Bush's biggest problems that Clinton asserted she could solve. And who better, according to Clinton's campaign rhetoric, than Hillary herself to solve these pressing problems. Speaking of health care specifically, she stated, "We all want a health care system that is universal, high quality, and affordable... This isn't just an issue for me—it is a passion and a cause—and it is a fight I will continue until every single American is insured—no exceptions, no excuses" (Clinton, 2008c, para. 18).

Clinton's speeches, in terms of addressing her health care exigence, utilized a blended rhetorical approach—one that exhibited nurturance while also stressing her personal strength and determination to enact health care reform. This blended approach embodied what Rosenthal (1998a) described as "integrative leadership," as previously discussed in Chapter One. It stressed the idea that Clinton was a problem-solver, a conventional male trait of leadership, while equally stressing the mutuality and cooperation that Rosenthal argued was essential for female success in leadership roles. However, at the same time, because Clinton presented herself as the dominant protagonist in her quest for health care reform, she may have undercut the qualities Han (2003) argued would aid a female presidential contender: the willingness to share power and work across party lines. Additionally, because Clinton regularly lumped all Republican presidential

candidates as being like George W. Bush in her campaign rhetoric, her ability to work across party lines could have also been diminished.

Clinton's debate performances also stressed the issue of health care and, similarly, stressed that the Bush administration was the cause of problems on this front. In the first Democratic debate in South Carolina, Clinton asserted that a lack of health care was symptomatic of the Bush administration's favoritism for corporate interests at the expense of American families: "...this administration and corporate America today don't see middle class and working Americans. They are invisible. They don't understand that if you're a family that can't get health care, you are really hurting...to the administration in the White House, you're invisible" ("South Carolina Democratic," 2007, para. 580-581).

Similarly, as her opponents (Obama and Edwards, specifically) developed and released their own health care policies, Clinton used the same strategy. She argued, seemingly lumping Obama specifically with Bush in terms of health care reform and problems, "my health care program will cover everyone. I don't leave anybody out. It is a universal system" ("The Democratic Debate in South," 2008, para. 325). She continued this line of argument later in this same debate, attempting to set Obama apart for the lack of inclusivity under his health care policy, urging voters to understand that his policy would not have solved the problems faced by many Americans: "I think it is imperative that we have plans, as both John [Edwards] and I do, that from the very beginning say, 'You know what? Everybody has got to be covered' (para. 392). She summed up this attack succinctly just a few moments later, using the same rhetoric to attack Obama that she had previously used when she had attacked Bush's policies: "I am not running for president to put band-aids on our problems. I want to get universal health care for every single American" (para. 397).

This specific approach by Clinton—arguing on behalf of including everyone under her health care plan—was wise, in terms of gender. It made Clinton appear as if she were embodying not only the nurturing personae required of “True Womanhood,” by arguing that the government had to take care of the people to save them from suffering, but it also encouraged voters to see that she, more so than Obama, was the more inclusive of the two candidates. To back up this contention, Clinton focused on health care throughout her campaign more than any other issue, and asserted: “...this is the passionate cause of my public service” (“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 96). Clinton repeatedly featured establishing universal health care as her primary mission, in spite of her past failures during her husband’s first term, and despite the cautionary statements of fellow Democrats:

Now, in Barack’s plan, he very clearly says he will mandate that parents get health insurance for their children. So it’s not that he is against mandatory provisions, it’s that he doesn’t think it would be politically acceptable to require that for everyone. I just disagree with that. I think we as Democrats have to be willing to fight for universal health care...And what I’ve concluded, when I was looking at this—because I got the same kind of advice, which was, it’s controversial, you’ll run into all of this buzz saw, and I said, been there, done that. But if you don’t start by saying, you’re going to achieve universal health care, you will be nibbled to death (“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 105-108).

On one hand, stressing the distinctions between her plan and Obama’s was wise, given that health care reform was one of the few issues wherein Clinton and Obama had distinctly different policy agendas, though they shared similar overall goals of establishing a universal health care system. Thus, Clinton did well on the health care front to draw distinctions between herself and

her Democratic rival. On the other hand, focusing on health care reminded voters of Clinton's previous failing on the executive level, and could have also caused voters to remember the bitter infighting that occurred between Democrats and Republicans during her husband's administration, a time when the esteem of Democrats on the national level became greatly diminished. As such, featuring health care as a central exigence during her campaign was a costly gamble.

Unfortunately for Clinton, health care, and indeed, most of the salient issues of the campaign, was overshadowed by the constraints of her rhetorical situation in her later debate performances. In fact, during the Cleveland debate, Clinton was not able (for one reason or another) to bring up universal health care at all. Indeed, the only time universal health care was mentioned during this debate was when Obama attacked Clinton's plan, turning her vehement defense of her health care policies against her. Obama argued:

You know, she [Clinton] mentioned that she is a fighter on health care. And look—I do not in any way doubt that Senator Clinton genuinely wants to provide health care to all Americans. What I have said is that the way she approached it back in '93, I think, was wrong in part because she had the view that what's required is simply to fight. And Senator Clinton ended up fighting not just the insurance companies and the drug companies, but also members of her own party. And as a consequence, there were a number of people, like Jim Cooper of Tennessee and Bill Bradley and Pat Moynihan, who were not included in the negotiations. And we had the potential of bringing people together to actually get something done ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 218-219).

This was wise for Obama, because his rhetoric turned the tables on Clinton—using one of her central exigencies against her. Though Clinton attempted to position herself as the more inclusive candidate in terms of health care, Obama challenged this assertion by reminding voters of the divisive nature that Clinton had engendered among even her Democratic allies. In essence, Obama's claims regarding Clinton's failings in health care robbed Clinton of the advantage ascribed to female leaders of establishing cooperative government (Han, 2003; Rosenthal, 1998a). This reminded the audience that Clinton was not conventionally feminine, and indeed, was often so determined to win, that she had often alienated her supporters.

Clinton's failure in rhetorically utilizing the exigence of health care effectively was clearly evident in the final debate. Clinton failed to mention health care even once during her final debate of the primary season in Philadelphia. By this time, as previously established, the economic crisis was beginning to dominate national news (Isidore, 2008). In fact, according to one *CNN.com* poll, the economy had become the number one issue among voters in Texas and Ohio over a month before this debate took place (Steinhauser, 2008b). As such, high dollar policies like establishing Clinton's universal health care system would have likely seemed too costly for most Americans to support, and thus, one of her chief problems to be solved was removed from her rhetorical arsenal. And, indeed, if she had mentioned establishing a universal health care system, Clinton likely would have fallen into the same trap as other female politicians—appearing to be too liberal or out of touch with the realistic, important concerns faced by the majority of citizens who were facing financial burdens that did not exist during the beginning of the campaign (Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 1998; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Epstein, et al., 1998; Palmer & Simon, 1996). Thus, it was not only for economically practical reasons, but

also because of the gendered double bind Clinton faced on this issue, that health care had to be abandoned as a core exigence late in the campaign.

Health care as a key exigence, in the end, proved costly to Clinton's success. Because of her past experience with this issue, Clinton likely believed that she would look more experienced, and thus, more qualified on the subject than her Democratic rivals, specifically Barack Obama. But the double bind was, once again, at work, and forced Clinton to acknowledge her past instances of failed, divisive leadership as she, at the same time, touted her own experience with health care. And as this was the key exigence from which Clinton could derive perceived femininity among her audience for championing a universal health care system, the failure of this exigence likely did more damage to Clinton's persona and reputation among voters than adding any potential inference of femininity.

Clinton's War in Iraq Exigence as Double Bind

The war in Iraq as exigence was a dominant aspect of Clinton's speeches and debate performances, while also serving as a source of ire throughout the campaign. Clinton originally supported the Bush administration's efforts in Iraq and voted in the Senate to authorize the war, a vote that she knew isolated her from some Democratic voters (Healy, 2007a). Additionally, because Barack Obama was against the war from the beginning, and his campaign constantly reminded voters of Clinton's initial support, Clinton had to constantly address the inherent contradiction of her stance throughout the campaign rather than stressing her proposals to end the war if she were elected president.

Further complicating Clinton's message on this issue, the press coverage of Clinton's campaign message against Bush's Iraq strategy perpetuated Clinton's stance against the administration, but consistently reminded voters of Clinton's initial support of the war. A

quotation from one article written by Balz (2007a) illustrates this issue effectively: “Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) offered her harshest assessment to date of President Bush’s Iraq war strategy yesterday, continuing her steady evolution from one of the war’s staunchest supporters to one of the administration’s most prominent critics” (para. 1). Later in the same article, Balz provided a sober assessment of Clinton’s rhetorical problem with the Iraq war that was almost prophetic of her failures with the handling of this crucial issue: “That resolution [that authorized Bush’s actions in Iraq] haunted her politically as public support for the war began to erode, particularly among Democrats” (para. 8).

Whether or not Clinton actually supported the initial war in Iraq is something only she can attest to; however, as Davis (2003) aptly pointed out, the first woman president would likely be pressed and tested on key issues of national security. Additionally, we know that one of the key masculine elements associated with the presidency is ‘strength’ or ‘toughness’ (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Bystrom, 2004; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 1998; Gilligan, 1993). Thus, Clinton was caught in a double bind with regard to this exigence: she could not bend to the liberal view against the war effort, or even apologize for her vote, because she would be potentially deemed too soft or weak. Yet, as the war dragged on and public sentiment, especially among Democrats, waned, she had to defend her initial position regardless of her later views.

Another related issue complicating Clinton’s rhetoric on Iraq was the fact that she never showed regret for her initial decision to support the war until after she started her bid for the presidency—an action that was viewed by many as insincere and simply politically motivated (Balz, 2007b). Clinton had a reputation for years as a politically ambitious woman, willing to do almost anything to gain the power she sought (Anderson & Sheeler, 2005; Corrigan, 2000; Dubriwny, 2005; Parry-Giles, 2000; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles,

1996). Thus, speculation abounded that Clinton had crafted her rhetoric regarding Iraq solely because she knew her initial support for the war would alienate her from Democratic and anti-war independent voters. This was significant, because as Kornblut and Cohen (2007) rightly argued, Iraq, along with health care, were the two most dominant topics during the Democratic primary. And because Clinton's position on Iraq was tenuous, a fitting rhetorical response was required from Clinton—a response that was vague and rarely apologetic, and consequently, did not assuage voters who were anti-war and already hesitant in their support for Clinton.

In dealing with the issue of Iraq in news media outlets, Clinton was vague early on. In the beginning of her campaign, she remarked, “I am cursed with the responsibility gene...I am. I admit that. You've got to be very careful in how you proceed with any combat situation in which American lives are at stake” (Healy, 2007a, para. 14-15). And while Clinton was likely trying to deflect her opponent's charges by stressing the thoughtfulness with which she approached her vote, it became clear as the campaign dragged on that a clearer response and defense was required. As I demonstrate over the next few pages of this chapter, especially in her debate performances, Clinton was consistently harangued by moderators and her opponents and pressed for clarification about the Iraq war more than almost any other issue.

In her campaign speeches, Clinton took a very interesting but wise approach to addressing the Iraq war, given that she was a female trying to be elected commander-in-chief. Primarily, she sought to position herself on one hand as a nurturing protector and on the other hand as a vehement and tough critic of Bush's failed efforts in Iraq.

First, Clinton positioned herself rhetorically as someone who cared deeply for protecting the troops, while they were abroad fighting the enemy and protecting our country and after they returned home. She consistently argued that she would be capable of establishing “the right end

to the war in Iraq,” stressing the importance of not just simply removing our troops without a thought as to how this would be done or the implications of such an action (Clinton, 2007a, para. 1). Clinton made it clear through her use of rhetoric who she blamed for our course in Iraq (and thus, who was putting the soldiers she sought to protect in danger): “After seven years of George Bush, America is ready for change. We are ready for a new beginning” (Clinton, 2007b, para. 18). In fact, Bush treating our troops, and indeed all Americans, as if they were “invisible” was a central theme of Clinton’s early campaign rhetoric: “...if you think it is time to make sure we have no invisible Americans, then I need you to stand up and caucus for me,” she noted in Iowa (Clinton, 2007b, para. 48). She immediately continued, “If you can’t bear to see our young men and women, our sons and our daughters, continuing to fight another country’s civil war, if you believe that the best way to support our troops is to bring them home—but you want to be sure it’s done the right way—then I need you to stand and caucus for me” (para. 49).

Assuming a tough but nurturing, protective stance was a wise approach to the issue of Iraq, especially considering what we know about the ideologies of “Republican Motherhood” or “True Womanhood.” All women, regardless of their political aspirations, are expected to be sensitive, caring, and helping in order to, as Helgesen (1995) has asserted, “emphasize relationships with people” (p. 28). Still, the role of motherhood also implies not just nurturing, but also protecting one’s children (Bem, 1993). Clinton’s adoption of a protective stance toward our nation’s troops, while exhibiting tough rhetoric toward Bush, was in keeping with perceptions of gendered normativity. Thus, by approaching the exigence of Iraq in this way, as a way to help our troops, she was not overtly challenging gendered stereotypes about the behaviors of women.

Clinton's use of George Bush's policy in Iraq as central exigence continued in the speech following her win in New Hampshire and, as previously indicated, also included other issues beyond Iraq. Clinton asserted, "Too many have been invisible for too long. Well, you are not invisible to me. The oil companies, the drug companies, the health insurance companies, the predatory student loan companies have had seven years of a president who stands up for them. It's time we had a president who stands up for all of you" (Clinton, 2008a, para. 4-5). She further asserted in this speech, once again, that it was necessary to not just end the war in Iraq, but that we needed to end the war correctly. Furthermore, again attacking Bush more so than any of her Democratic rivals, she argued that it was time "to take care of our brave veterans and restore America's standing, respect, and credibility around the world" (para. 8). Clinton's rhetoric made it clear what the central problem with America was—the failure of the Bush Administration—and thus, asserted that she was the best candidate to take care of this problem: "We are determined to tackle our toughest problems and stand up [for] those who most need a champion because we are determined to make America work again for all of our people" (para. 11). Indeed, nowhere in these early speeches does Clinton directly attack her chief Democratic rivals, Barack Obama or John Edwards, or mention the problems with their plans or policy goals. Thus, Bush, and his mishandling of the war was clearly at the forefront of Clinton's rhetorically-constructed exigencies—a problematic focus for a primary campaign that will be discussed in depth in the next section of this chapter.

This theme continued in her later speeches; more than any other issue that required immediate attention and action, Bush and those who supported his administration's decisions, required citizens to vote for Clinton, or as in her last speech at least, a Democrat. Clinton, with reference to the cronyism and favoritism for certain Iraq war contractors, like the infamous

Halliburton corporation with which Vice President Cheney was directly connected as a past CEO, continued to assert that Bush had only listened to special interests, ignoring the wishes of the American people (Clinton, 2008b). In doing so, and by employing a failed Iraq strategy, Clinton argued time and time again that America's reputation around the world had suffered more than at any time in history because of George W. Bush and must be repaired (Clinton, 2008c).

Bush, and his failures in Iraq, was also prominent as an exigence in Clinton's debate performances. In her very first statement in the first debate in South Carolina, Clinton asserted, "...the American people have spoken. The Congress has voted, as of today, to end this war. And now we can only hope that the president will listen" ("South Carolina Democratic," 2007, para. 4). Clinton, like all of the other Democratic contenders involved in this debate, expressed her doubts that Bush would, in the end, act to bring our troops home, and the idea of Bush as exigence persisted. However, Clinton's opponents in the debate, foreshadowing one of the dominant themes throughout the campaign, repeatedly attacked Clinton's initial vote for the war. Clinton, for her part, attempted to deflect the issue by looking forward to the decisions that needed to be made to end the conflict: "...I take responsibility for my vote. Obviously, I did as good a job as I could at the time. It was a sincere vote based on the information available to me ...But I think the real question before us: Is what do we do now? ...Bush is stubbornly refusing to listen to the will of the American people ...And I can only end by saying that if this president does not get us out of Iraq, when I am president, I will" (para. 28-32). Using Bush's Iraq strategy in constructing a defense of her own vote in this way created a scapegoat for her decision—a deflection that Clinton hoped would lessen the effect of her Iraq vote and prompt voters to view the Iraq war as less a site of blame for her and more a problem that required resolution. When the

issue came up later in this same debate, Clinton once again used this strategy: “And the problem is that the president seems determined not to change course, despite the fact that we are not gaining ground” (para. 88).

A strategy of deflection was potentially damaging to Clinton in terms of gender as a lens for understanding her rhetorical behaviors. As the discussion of gendered personality traits indicated in Chapter One, people (and thus, voters) often associate honesty, cooperation with others, and responsibility with women more so than with men (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Buchanan, 1996; Bystrom, 2004; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 1998; Fox & Schuhmann, 1999; Gilligan, 1993; Han, 2003; Helgesen, 1995; Witt, et al., 1994). As such, when Clinton deflected her own responsibility and immediately targeted someone else for her own errors or lapses in judgment, she defied many of the positive characteristics of women politicians that she could otherwise have utilized to her benefit. Also, when we consider the fact that blaming others for failures, as Huddy and Terkildsen (1993) pointed out, has been one of the negative characteristics most often associated with male leaders, we also see Clinton embodying the negative traits of leadership that most find distasteful. Thus, the double bind plaguing political women once again becomes evident: Clinton had to appear tough on a masculine issue (the war in Iraq) or she would have faced criticism for her weakness or her inability to deal with a male issue. But addressing her initial Iraq vote in this way made Clinton seem to lack honesty and integrity, or that she was embodying negative male leadership traits. Thus, from the outset of the campaign, Clinton faced palpable double binds in terms of her stance on Iraq.

As the campaign heated up, however, blaming Bush for Iraq became more complicated. This was primarily true as the 2007 “troop surge” authorized by Bush took effect and, because of this, alleged progress was being made in Iraq (Bacon, Jr., 2007). When asked about her Iraq

policy in later debates, Clinton would still point out Bush's failures: that he had given the Iraqis a "blank check" to make progress at America's expense, and reminding audience members of the problems that they would all inherit because of Bush's failures, arguing (to audience applause), "Obviously we've got to rein in...President Bush" ("The Democratic Debate in South," 2008, para. 447-449). Reining in Bush became a prominent Clinton argument, in terms of Iraq, after Super Tuesday, as well. She noted in her first debate against only Obama, "I think both Barack and I have tried in these debates...to be as responsible as we can be, because we know this president, based on what he said in the State of the Union, intends to leave at least 130,000, if not more, troops in Iraq as he exits. It's the most irresponsible abdication of what should be a presidential commitment to end what he started" ("Transcript of Thursday's," 2008, para. 406). Clinton was, here, seemingly trying to regain the positive image traits of 'responsibility' by attacking Bush in this way—a positive element of female political rhetoric previously discussed. However, Clinton was still doing so in a way that was accusatory and directly confrontational. And while this type of discourse may be acceptable for male politicians seeking office, we have seen that such a stylistic approach can have dire consequences when used by a woman, especially Hillary Clinton (Campbell, 1998).

The Iraq issue was not only complicated by Clinton's rhetoric, though; Obama, for his part, was persistent on the issue of Iraq in tying Clinton to her original vote to authorize Bush's war efforts. In the first debate between just Clinton and himself, Obama argued, "I will offer a clear contrast as somebody who never supported this war, thought it was a bad idea. I don't want to just end the war, but I want to end the mindset that got us into war in the first place" ("Transcript of Thursday's," 2008, para. 428). Obama continued this line of argumentation in the

Cleveland debate after Clinton argued that both she and Obama had voted to provide funding and logistical support for the Iraq war; once again, Obama contended:

...this [our nation beginning the Iraq war] was a big strategic blunder. It was not a matter of, well, here is the initial decision, but since then we've voted the same way. Once we had driven the bus into the ditch, there were only so many ways we could get out. The question is, who's making the decision initially to drive the bus into the ditch? And the fact is that Senator Clinton often says that she is ready on day one, but in fact she was ready to give in to George Bush on day one on this critical issue ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 141).

Obama's rhetoric here, representative of his chief response to Clinton's stance on the Iraq war, damaged Clinton's cause rhetorically. As Bystrom (2003b) has previously indicated, voters associate men with the top two image traits sought in a president: the ability to lead the nation effectively during a crisis and the ability to make a difficult decision. On the exigence of Iraq, specifically, Clinton's rhetoric was unsuccessful in withstanding Obama's indictments on these two key fronts.

Indeed, it was her original vote to authorize the war that haunted Clinton as she tried to blame Bush and defend against Obama. When pressed on the issue during the first one-on-one debate between Clinton and Obama in Los Angeles, Clinton again attacked Bush as the true source of the problem:

You know, I've said many times if I had known then what I know now, I never would have given President Bush the authority. It was a sincere vote based on my assessment at the time and what I believed he would do with the authority he was given. He abused that authority, he misused that authority. I warned at the time it was not authority for a

preemptive war. Nevertheless, he went ahead and waged one, which has led to the position we find ourselves in today (“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 458-459). When the topic persisted during the same debate, Clinton continued her blaming of Bush and defense of her initial vote: “...I think I made a reasoned judgment. Unfortunately, the person who actually got to execute the policy did not” (para. 508).

Clinton continued this strategy of self-defense/attack Bush in later debates; in Cleveland specifically, after Obama began to put more pressure on her initial decision, Clinton once again defended by deflecting, and emphasized Bush as exigence: “Well, obviously, I’ve said many times that, although my vote on the 2002 authorization regarding Iraq was a sincere vote, I would not have voted that way again. I would certainly, as president, never have taken us to war in Iraq. And I regret deeply that President Bush waged a preemptive war, which I warned against and said I disagreed with” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 268-269). Clinton then did her best to change the subject, knowing that she was on shaky ground, and stated, “But I think this election has to be about the future” (para. 270). Rhetorically, Clinton’s stance on Iraq as presented here was incredibly problematic in terms of her presentation of her leadership style. Clinton, all along, stated that she agreed with Bush’s pre-emptive war because it was based on intelligence indicating that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, which was why she voted to authorize the war. Thus, these statements in Cleveland, once again, placed Clinton in a double bind in terms of the Iraq exigence; either she did not know what she was voting for but wanted to exhibit military ‘machismo’ and avoid the negative stereotypes ascribed to female politicians for looking weak, or she did know what she was getting the country into via her vote, and simply was trying to avoid any connection to her vote because the policy turned out to be

flawed. Certainly neither of these explanations displayed traits Americans have associated with strong leadership (Bystrom 2003b).

Clinton's rhetoric on the issue of Iraq was consistent through her final debate of the primary. Interestingly though, while she mentioned Bush's failures as a source of concern more than any other problem during the debate, and she brought up specific issues like Iraq, there was a distinct lack of focus to her rhetoric. Instead of emphasizing one issue or another, Clinton focused more on the general failings of Bush. She argued early on in the evening, "I have seen the damage of the Bush years. I've seen the extraordinary pain that people have suffered from because of the failed policies; you know, those who have held my hands who have lost sons or daughters in Iraq, and those who have lost sons or daughters because they didn't have health insurance" ("Democratic Debate in Philadelphia," 2008, para. 33). This newly generalized theme of Bush as exigence, rather than targeting his specific policies or issues, continued: "Now, that doesn't mean that people are not frustrated with the government. We have every reason to be frustrated, particularly with this administration" (para. 53).

More surprisingly, Clinton's rhetoric in the last debate seemed to reverse course for the candidate, making it seem as if Iraq was in fact not the biggest problem to fix: "It's not only about Iraq. It is about ending the war in Iraq, so that we can begin paying attention to all of the other problems we have" (para. 190). This was likely caused by the economic downturn that was beginning to spiral out of control in the United States during this part of the election (Isadore, 2008). Suddenly, Clinton's painting of Bush's handling of the war in Iraq as a central concern was no longer as appealing to voters, perceptually, as the frightening possibilities of unemployment, rising interest rates, and mortgage foreclosures were. This forced Clinton to adjust her rhetoric, at a very late stage in the contest, to still indict Bush and like-minded

Republicans while also having to include the economic concerns Americans faced, as evidenced by one of her later answers in the debate: "...President Bush decided...that the war in Iraq and tax cuts for the wealthiest of Americans were his priorities, neither of which he's ever paid for. I think it's the first time we've ever been taken to war and had a president who wouldn't pay for it" (para. 279). While this was seemingly a benign adjustment, it was damaging. Instead of spinning a more compelling narrative of senseless death and failures in leadership sparking war and terrorism, and seizing on the nurturing, feminine persona her rhetoric created early on in the campaign regarding Iraq, Clinton had to deal with the less compelling dollars and cents aspects of the war in order to address the economic changes in the country during the campaign. Additionally, Clinton was arguably at just as large a disadvantage when the more salient issue became the economy, considering that this is also an issue that is heavily gender-coded as masculine (Banwart & McKinney, 2005; Buchanan, 1996; Bystrom, 2004; Clift & Brazaitis, 2000; Dolan, 1998; Fox & Schuhmann, 1999; Gilligan, 1993; Han, 2003; Helgesen, 1995; Witt, et al., 1994).

It became clear that, for Clinton, using Bush's failed policy in Iraq as a primary exigence during her campaign was risky, and, just as with her focus on health care, proved costly. Her initial vote to authorize military action did, indeed, come back to haunt her and likely compelled many voters to turn to Obama who had never supported the war in the first place. Clearly, she had to address this issue; from the beginning of the campaign, the war in Iraq was a top concern among all citizens, and especially Democrats. However, by featuring Bush's handling of the Iraq war as one of her two key exigencies during her campaign, it seemed as if Clinton had backed herself into a difficult corner, rhetorically. Similarly, Clinton's other key exigence, universal health care, also backed her into an uncomfortable corner and forced Democratic voters to

remember some distant, yet still painful, memories from the early 1990s. In sum, both of these issues, exigencies that Clinton established as crucial to address through her own use of rhetoric, reminded voters not just of her failed leadership in the past, but of the general lack of positive feminine qualities embodied by Clinton.

Clinton's General Election Strategy for the Primary Campaign as Exigence

From the beginning of the primary campaign, Hillary Clinton's rhetoric made it appear less that she was attempting to defeat her Democratic rivals for the presidential nomination and more that she was running against George W. Bush. She saw the Republican candidates as all representing a continuation of Bush's failed leadership and she didn't believe that the primary was where she needed to focus her efforts, given her large lead among Democrats in virtually all early polls. On one hand, this could have been inferred as a wise strategy, given the many policy differences that Clinton had with her Republican opponents and with George W. Bush. It also helped her avoid negativity, as mentioned in the previous section. As Chapter Three indicated, going negative hurt Clinton more than helped. As such, any distinctions she could draw, rhetorically, could not only have aided Clinton in establishing her own platform, but could also have served the dual purpose of demonstrating her strength and toughness in taking on Republicans in preparation for the general election. On the other hand, such a strategy made it appear as if Clinton was, at least initially, ignoring her Democratic rivals. Whether this was because she and her Democratic opponents had too many similarities to draw constructive contrasts between them, or simply because Clinton considered her early lead in the polls as indicating that she did not need to focus on her primary rivals, or to avoid negative campaigning—especially when she didn't see primary opponents as the challenge—can only be guessed at. However, her strategy of attacking only Republicans and George Bush early on, and

then positioning herself against John McCain (the eventual Republican nominee) specifically was a dominant exigence established through Clinton's campaign rhetoric. This was partly because of the two primary exigencies she chose to address during the campaign, namely establishing universal health care and the war in Iraq, but also because of the double bind plaguing any woman running for high elective office who has to demonstrate her toughness and strength.

Just as her initial Iraq vote and her initial failures to pass health care reform during Bill Clinton's presidency had haunted Clinton, forcing a rhetorical response during the campaign, so too did questions about her electability in a general election contest against Republican rivals. Despite the initial aura of inevitability surrounding Clinton's candidacy, questions about her chances in the general election plagued her campaign almost immediately. Balz (2007b) noted, "The size and experience of the Democratic field underscores the reality that, for all of her support, fundraising potential and political muscle, Clinton continues to face questions about whether she can win a general election" (para. 14). This became especially apparent after her third place finish in the Iowa caucuses. Healy (2008a) pointed out a major issue in terms of electability for Clinton: a lack of support among Independent voters: "Mrs. Clinton's lackluster finish raises anew questions about her electability, and whether independent voters—twice as many of whom backed Mr. Obama over her—will ever come to Mrs. Clinton" (para. 5).

Conversely, perceptions complicating Clinton's general election chances were also sparked by the general disenchantment with Washington-as-usual politics, and the public perception that Clinton was part of this establishment. Obama, on the other hand, stood in stark contrast to such an image. He was an African-American presidential candidate, relatively new to national politics, and was able to create a sense of excitement among voters (and the press), as

evidenced by the following excerpt from *The New York Times* on the eve of the New Hampshire primary:

...the final hours of campaigning before the New Hampshire primary became a rush to capture the excitement surrounding Barack Obama. On a day that crackled with historical possibility, the candidates fell over themselves with pledges to change the nation's course as the presidential contest, for the moment at least, coalesced around a dominant theme. Their words—in speeches to packed halls across the state and in television advertisements—were testimony to the extent Mr. Obama has transformed the race and capitalized on public disenchantment with Washington (Nagourney, 2008, para. 1-2).

As the primary campaign extended into the late spring of 2008, the speculation about Clinton's chances spun into overdrive, and further complicated her rhetorical response as Democrats publicly debated what the protracted campaign could mean for their party's chances, and whether Clinton would be the best candidate in November. Representative Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) told the *USA Today* in April, “‘It's a little bit like playing with fire,’ he said of the Obama-Clinton battle and the fuel it could give to Republicans” (Memmott & Page, 2008, para. 3). Leibovich (2008) expressed a similar sentiment in *The New York Times*, suggesting that the Clintons' baggage would have been a serious liability to Democrats in the general election:

...there is something more wrenching at work as well, a reckoning of whether the Clintons, on balance, have been good or bad for the party. It has the feel of a very personal testing of loyalties to a former president who once always seemed to be adding to the ‘Friends of Bill’ list, and to a sitting senator who, if not so driven by her husband to win over everyone, use her fame to help elect other Democrats (para. 7).

Thus, in clear ways, though not always presented as such by Clinton herself, her general election chances served as a significant exigence for the candidate that required a rhetorical response from Clinton.

In responding to such a problem, surprisingly, Clinton's speeches were bereft of addressing this seemingly most pressing of issues: her electability. There were only small examples from her key campaign speeches wherein Clinton actually addresses this specific exigence, choosing to deal with only Obama as her rival, or choosing instead to speak to the various other constraints she faced during her campaign (see Chapter Five: Analysis of Clinton's Rhetorical Constraints). More often than not, when Clinton would address the issue during her speeches, she would simply indict Bush, as previously articulated, and assert, "Well, the Republicans want eight more years of the same... Well, they've got until January 20, 2009—and not one day more" (Clinton, 2008c, para. 12-13). Clinton would also make hidden assertions about her work ethic, the implied conclusion asserting that she was in the race for the long haul and would fight hard for a general election win. Clinton, after her Super Tuesday victories, asserted:

We must continue to be a nation that strives always to give each of our children a better future, a nation of optimists who believe our best days are yet to come, a nation of idealists holding fast to our deepest values, that we are all created equal, that we all deserve to fulfill our God-given potential, that we are all destined for progress together. It is this ideal inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty in this great city, that has overlooked our harbors through wars and depressions and the dark days of September 11, the words we all know that give voice to America's embrace: 'Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free'—a constant reminder that here in

America we face our challenges and we embrace all of our people. So today we say with one voice, “Give us that child who wants to learn, give us the people in need of work, give us the veterans who need our care. We say give us the economy to rebuild and this war to end, give us this nation to heal, this world to lead, this moment to seize.’ I know we’re ready (Clinton, 2008c, para. 22-24).

Clearly, though, Clinton’s speeches failed to address the exigence of electability that had been proliferating through major news media outlets, and thus, had likely resonated with voters. As such, in the absence of a response to this problem in her speeches, Clinton raised doubts about her chances against a Republican foe in November by specifically not saying a word about this exigence.

Of course, because of specific questions asking Clinton about her general election chances by moderators, Clinton’s debate performances had to feature rhetoric that was more specific in addressing this exigence. In the first debate, Brian Williams asked Clinton about the unfavorable views toward her embodied by a majority of voters in a (then) recent poll, and the subsequent Republican candidates’ comments in their first presidential primary debate that indicated they hoped they would face Clinton in the general election. Clinton responded, “I take it as a perverse form of flattery, actually, that if they weren’t worried, they would not be so vitriolic in their criticism of me” (“South Carolina Democratic,” 2007, para. 175). Essentially, Clinton attempted to rhetorically turn this negative into a positive—an asset she possessed for a potential general election campaign.

Clinton would use a similar strategy in the second South Carolina debate, as well; as she discussed her failures in health care reform, she used her experience since the early 1990s as evidence of her determination when faced with strong Republican opponents to stand up for

Democratic Party ideals. Clinton stated, “I think that the whole idea of universal health care is such a core Democratic principle that I am willing to go to the mat for it. I’ve been there before. I will be there again. I am not giving in; I am not giving up; and I’m not going to start out leaving 15 million Americans out of health care” (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 394). Clinton also used this tactic later in the campaign; in her first debate against only Obama, Clinton, once again addressing health care, stated:

...it is so important that, as Democrats, we carry the banner of universal health care. The health insurance industry is very clever and extremely well-funded. I know this. I had \$300 million of incoming advertising and attacks during our efforts back in ’93 and ’94. And one of the reasons why I’ve designed the plan I have put forward now is because I learned a lot about what people want, what people are willing to accept, and how we get the political process to work (“Transcript of Thursday’s Democratic,” 2008, para. 144-145).

Unfortunately, Clinton’s rhetoric here lacked rhetorical force for one clear reason that likely occurred to some of her audience members: though she had stood up to Republicans in the past, she had typically failed in these instances to accomplish change, legislative or otherwise. As such, while Clinton may have appeared tough and strong (masculine) by using this rhetoric, such words remind voters of her own failed leadership in the past, and diminished the weight of her message that she would be the stronger candidate in the general election. Moreover, Clinton had to do this in ways that contradicted conventional femininity or Campbell’s (1989; 1998) feminine style because of the confrontational nature of her words and past actions, which further undermined Clinton’s persuasion.

Clinton's rhetoric during the early debates was double-edged in terms of success. On the one hand, it was wise of Clinton to rhetorically construct herself as a tough fighter, able to compete against the strongest of opponents in order to contradict traditional gendered notions of female weakness. On the other hand, her strategy faltered because she constructed the tough image by demonstrating, essentially, that she was in fact a Washington-insider. She constantly reminded her audience of how long she had been in politics, how many fights she had won and lost, and thus, fed Obama's growing narrative as being a genuine agent of change to the Washington-as-usual way that politics worked. Thus, Clinton's handling of this specific exigence reflected the tangible double bind that Bower (2003) and Gelb and Palley (1982) have referred to. In order to prove her toughness for a general election matchup, as called for by news media outlets and debate moderators (all of whom were members of the press, and the vast majority of whom were also male), Clinton's rhetoric fed Obama's narrative almost as if his own campaign staff had designed it themselves.

Once the race was narrowed to just Clinton and Obama, and once the Republicans settled on John McCain as their nominee, Clinton's rhetoric became somewhat more focused, drawing specific contrasts between her opponent's and her chances against McCain. In her first one-on-one debate against Obama, Clinton attempted to seize on a previous comment Obama had made about not setting pre-conditions before meeting with the leaders of nations hostile toward the United States (i.e. Iran). Clinton asserted, "And I think we've got to have a full diplomatic effort, but I don't think the president should put the prestige of the presidency on the line in the first year to have meetings without preconditions with five of the worst dictators in the world" ("Transcript of Thursday's Democratic," 2008, para. 46). Clinton added, "So we have differences both at home and around the world, but, again, I would emphasize that what really is

important here, because the Republicans were in California debating yesterday, they are more of the same” (para. 47).

Clinton also attempted to lessen certain differences between herself and Obama while she also acknowledged the exigence posed by a November election. On the topic of Iraq, specifically, Clinton asserted, “I’ve also been a leader in trying to prevent President Bush from getting us committed to staying in Iraq regardless for as long as Senator McCain and others have said it might be, 50 to a hundred years” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 161). When she did this, Obama quickly responded, asserting that Clinton, like himself, was surely qualified to lead, but that he would simply do a better job. Obama contended:

So I don’t think that Senator Clinton has to answer a question as to whether she’s capable of being president or our standard bearer. I will say this, that the reason I think I’m better as the nominee is that I can bring this country together in a unique way, across divisions of race, religion, region. And that is what’s going to be required in order for us to actually deliver on the issues that both Senator Clinton and I care so much about (para. 298-299).

Again, this was a sound rhetorical strategy by Obama. Obama never had to challenge Clinton’s qualifications to be a leader; rather, based on her own rhetoric that had established herself as a strong, viable candidate, he was allowed to stress one of the most negative characteristics associated with Hillary Clinton: her divisiveness. Countless scholars in various fields, including communication, have remarked that Clinton’s divisiveness had been a defining characteristic of Clinton’s persona and rhetoric for years, to the extent that it often required rhetorical transformations to make her seem more likable and charismatic among the public (Corrigan, 2000; Dow & Tonn, 1993; Durbriwny, 2005; Gardetto, 1997; Kelly, 2001; Parry-Giles, 2000; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002; Trent & Short-Thompson, 2003). Clinton’s response to questions

about her electability fed these past assertions about her personality, and allowed Obama to use the typically feminine strategy of adopting an ‘above-it-all’ demeanor (Witt, et al., 1994).

Indeed, as she progressed through the debates, Clinton’s rhetoric seemed intent on feeding Obama’s argument about her divisiveness by presenting herself as the toughest, strongest candidate able to win a general election. To that end, Clinton’s Republican enemies, and John McCain specifically, became hapless rhetorical allies for her during the debates when looking ahead to a general election campaign, and allowed Clinton to begin drawing distinction between herself and her Democratic opponents while she established her toughness. Toward the end of the second debate in South Carolina, Clinton argued:

I believe of any one of us, I am better positioned and better able to take on John McCain or any Republican when it comes to issues about protecting and defending our country and promoting our interest in the world. And if it is indeed the classic Republican campaign, I’ve been there. I’ve done that. They’ve been after me for 16 years, and much to their dismay I am still here. And I intend to be still here when that election comes around and we win in November 2008 (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 614).

Moments later in this same debate, Clinton went on, asserting that her toughness and alleged appeal to independents would aid her in a November election: “...if you are someone like I am, who has withstood the full force of corporate lobbyists, starting with the health insurance companies, and the drug companies, and the oil companies, and everybody I’ve taken on for all of these years, you know, I think I’m independent and tough enough to be able to deal with anybody. And that’s what I intend to do” (para. 614). Clinton’s assertion of her toughness and resilience were rhetorical weapons she was comfortable wielding, especially when she dealt with

skepticism about handling Republican rivals. During her first debate against Obama alone, Clinton was overtly optimistic about her chances against Republicans, by stating, “The Republicans will try to put either of us into the same box that, if we oppose this president’s Iraq policy, somehow we cannot fully represent the interests of the United States, be commander-in-chief. I reject that out of hand, and I actually welcome that debate with whomever they nominate” (“Transcript of Thursday’s Democratic,” 2008, para. 463). This rhetoric, while seemingly wise for a woman running for such a masculine political office, was damaging on two gendered fronts. First, it reminded voters that while Clinton may have weathered several battles, she consistently had to engage in such battles against Republicans, which reminded voters of her divisive nature. Additionally, since Clinton failed in many of these battles (i.e. universal health care) or was proven to be wrong in such skirmishes (i.e. Iraq), this rhetoric diminished the appearance that she could, indeed, be a strong leader. Thus, Clinton’s rhetoric in arguing on behalf of her general election chances was counterintuitive and unproductive.

Clinton’s use of bravado, of ‘rhetorical strength,’ was also displayed during her final debate with Obama. Once McCain secured the pledged delegates necessary to secure his nomination for the Republicans, Clinton attempted to demonstrate that she knew how best to beat her Senate colleague, and argued as such when asked bluntly by George Stephanopoulos, whether Clinton thought Obama could beat John McCain. Clinton argued:

...what is important is that we understand exactly the challenges facing us in order to defeat Senator McCain. He will be a formidable candidate. There isn’t any doubt about that. He has a great American story to tell...But I also know, having gone through 16 years of being on the receiving end of what the Republican Party dishes out, how important it is that we try to go after every single vote everywhere we possibly can to get

those electoral votes that we're going to need to have the next president elected
("Democratic Debate in Philadelphia," 2008, para. 59-61).

When Stephanopoulos had pressed Clinton to answer directly whether or not Obama was qualified, she continued to still stress her own chances as superior:

Yes. Yes. Yes. Now, I think that I can do a better job...I am better able and better prepared in large measure because of what I've been through and the work I've done and the results I've produced for people and the coalition that I have put together in this campaign...I believe I'm the better and stronger candidate against Senator McCain, to go toe to toe with him on national security and on how we turn this economy around (para. 63-65).

As if to more securely position herself as the stronger candidate, tough enough to take on McCain, Clinton added later in this same debate, "I've been in this arena for a long time. I have a lot of baggage, and everybody has rummaged through it for years...And so therefore, I have, you know, an opportunity to come to this campaign with a very strong conviction and feeling that I will be able to withstand whatever the Republican sends our way" (para. 161). Once again, in attempting to demonstrate her toughness as a female candidate, Clinton's own words reminded voters of the large amount of political baggage, mostly negative and demonstrating Clinton's lack of femininity, that she has carried as a nominee. And while such rhetoric did remind voters that she could handle such Republican attacks, as she had for almost two decades, Clinton's rhetoric counteracted the belief that she was not partisan or divisive and reminded voters of the intense political infighting that had characterized national politics during Bill Clinton's time as president. As such, her rhetoric advancing her strength and toughness in order to persuade voters that she was 'man enough' for a general election, bolstered Obama's claims that Clinton was a

divisive leader, welcoming and even enjoying attacks from anyone, and further reminded voters of how truly unfeminine she was as a politician.

Chapter Summary

When addressing all four of the exigencies that dominated Hillary Clinton's rhetorical situation as she campaigned for president, the theoretical double binds faced by political women have been shown to have had a tangible hold on Clinton's campaign rhetoric. Clinton, in wanting to be considered as the best candidate for president and not the best *female* presidential aspirant, struggled to utilize exigencies (health care, Iraq, and her general election chances) in a way that would allow her to escape her gender in persuading audiences that she could lead. She ignored the historic nature of her campaign because she had to—voters would not have been persuaded simply because she was a woman; she had to be the best candidate, so she turned a blind eye whenever possible to her gender. And when her attempts to prove that she was the best candidate to deal with her central exigencies failed, because she was too divisive, or embodied masculine characteristics to her detriment, or was simply wrong in her approach, Clinton could not or would not put forth rhetoric sufficient to convince voters of her abilities to solve the problems she addressed. Chapter Three clearly indicated that Clinton faced myriad double binds as she sought to convince her audience of her leadership abilities, and indeed, her femininity, and failed to adapt to the changing elements of her rhetorical situation. In much the same way, Clinton was unable to escape the double binds posed by the exigencies within her rhetorical situation—those created by outside sources, and those set forth in her own discourse. Thus, as much as Clinton would have perhaps hoped that her gender would be the last thing that would have influenced the election, it seems clear that the cultural expectations regarding the behavior and characteristics of women once again plagued Clinton. They ultimately limited her creation of effective rhetoric to

escape such double binds, complicated the exigencies she chose to feature in her campaign rhetoric, and thus marred her ability to achieve her party's nomination.

Chapter Five: Analysis of Clinton's Constraints

Bitzer (1968) stated, "...every rhetorical situation contains a set of *constraints* made up by persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence" (p. 8). Constraints within a rhetorical situation can be difficult to ascertain and differentiate from the audience and exigencies because of an obvious interplay among all three components. For instance, persons who make up the audience can also constrain the message in their responses to rhetoric or in re-focusing attention away from the exigencies discussed by rhetors to other situational factors. Similarly, while rhetors seek to position certain exigencies as the most crucial and needing to be addressed, constraints within a situation may also direct attention away from these exigencies and thus, compel rhetors to respond to such constraints rhetorically.

Garrett and Xiao (1993) came to similar conclusions in their study wherein they revisited and, consequently clarified, the interaction among the tenets of Bitzer's theoretical construct. These authors stated, "we would suggest that it is possible to keep all three elements in a dynamic tension, and to do so in a way that is truly rhetorical, by seeing the audience as the active center of the rhetorical situation," as is arguably the case when politicians attempt to garner votes during a campaign to support their nomination or election (p. 39). Garrett and Xiao continued, arguing, "in the same way the rhetorical exigencies are expressions of the situational audience's unsolved questions, concerns, anxieties, frustrations, and confusions, which need modification by discourse. The constraints, on the other hand, reflect the audience's expectations for an appropriate discourse in a given circumstance" (p. 39). Thus, as the analysis of the constraints within Hillary Clinton's rhetorical situation during the Democratic primary campaign demonstrates, many factors become salient between the previous analyses of audiences and

exigencies and the constraining factors that compelled Clinton to craft her rhetoric in a specific way.

Beyond a guiding definition of the constraints within a rhetorical situation, Bitzer (1968) also made note of the common sources of constraints. He stated, “standard sources of constraints include beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives, and the like; and when the orator enters the situation, [her] discourse not only harnesses constraints given by the situation but provides additional important constraints—for example [her] personal character, [her] logical proofs, and [her] style” (p. 8). Thus, Bitzer argued that while constraints can sometimes necessitate a rhetors’ discursive response due to the negative implications discerned from certain constraints, rhetors may also use constraints within the rhetorical situation to demonstrate the validity of their claims and the necessity of addressing their chosen exigencies. Constraints within rhetorical situations can, consequently, be factors external to the rhetor’s discourse or may be used within the speech act(s) to aid in persuading the audience. Indeed, Wallace (1971) argued, that how rhetors address factors such as the constraints surrounding their discourse indicate both the practical and the artistic elements of rhetoric itself. Wallace stated, “Rhetoric...is an art because its principles and teachings are directed to two general ends or functions: the making or producing of utterances and the understanding and appraising of them...Its principles reflect [people’s] behavior in their conversing, discussing, and speech-making when they are in practical settings...” (p. 3).

As becomes abundantly clear in the following pages, Clinton’s candidacy was marred by several constraints given her gender and the persona she spent her career creating as a public figure. Some of the constraints (her experience in politics, for instance) could have, arguably, been helpful to her candidacy, while others (the negative perceptions about Clinton’s reputation,

the strategies utilized by Obama's campaign, and Bill Clinton's many negative attacks and gaffes on the campaign trail) created a situation incredibly detrimental to her success—one that, ultimately, she could not escape. Specifically, there were four key areas of constraints operating within Clinton's rhetorical situation during her primary campaign for the presidency: Her experience, perceptions of her personal reputation, Obama's strategies during the campaign, and Bill Clinton's presence on the campaign trail.

Experience as Constraint for Clinton's Campaign Rhetoric

The qualification of experience serves as a prerequisite for any candidate hoping to win the presidency. Clinton, though, faced unique obstacles in establishing herself, rhetorically, as qualified to be president. Since no woman has been president, nor even won her major party's nomination for president, Clinton faced a unique barrier, as described in Chapter One and clarified, in terms of the historic nature of her candidacy, in Chapter Four. Additionally, as previously articulated, while Clinton was a political celebrity even before she announced her candidacy, this status did not automatically come with a perception of experience. Thus, as becomes clear over the next few pages, Clinton framed her campaign rhetoric in such a way as to deal with both of these constraints; she utilized her public personae to maximize perceptions of her experience while also carefully crafting her rhetoric to minimize the perception that she, as a woman, was unable to assume the presidency.

News media outlets both helped and hurt Clinton's message as she attempted to persuade voters of her experience and abilities to be president, and as such, an analysis of these stories provides a more fully developed picture of Clinton's rhetorical situation. The *New York Times* noted early in the race that Clinton viewed Obama as her major opponent, but also added her belief that "the threat of his candidacy would diminish as voters learned how inexperienced he

was in government and foreign affairs” (Healy, 2007, para. 9-10). This same article went on to also acknowledge a message that Clinton hoped would resonate with voters; “...that experience will be a major attribute for any successful candidate during difficult times” (para. 9-10). Indeed, her campaign immediately tried to establish Clinton as “the candidate best prepared to become the first Democrat in the White House since Bush succeeded [Bill] Clinton” (Balz, 2007b, para. 2-3), perpetuating the idea that experience, in general, was a requirement to be president, and that Clinton’s experience, specifically, gave her an edge over her competitors.

According to news reports, the Clinton campaign was abundantly aware of the negative personal perceptions plaguing Clinton (factors that are discussed in the next section of this chapter in more detail); however, “her advisers say the most effective way of overcoming questions about her electability is to focus voters’ attention on what it takes to be president—strength, intelligence, discipline, and toughness—all of which they say she already exhibits” (Balz, 2007b, para. 20). For this reason, Clinton seemed determined to position herself as the most experienced and capable Democratic candidate rather than the most likable. Additionally, polling numbers also suggested the merit behind Clinton’s strategy, as experience was still a dominant characteristic sought in presidential candidates (Lizza, 2007). Thus, Clinton was wise in choosing to emphasize this constraint as an asset to her electability. When one considers Clinton’s gender, it was even more of an important element to stress, considering, as indicated in Chapter One, male politicians tend to emphasize this characteristic in their campaign communication (Anderson & Sheeler, 2005; Blankenship & Robson, 1995; DeRosa & Bystrom, 1999; Parry-Giles & Parry-Giles, 1996).

As becomes clear from her campaign speeches and debate performances, one of the key areas Clinton used to establish experience and ability was to draw not just on her time in the

United States Senate, but also her experiences in the private sector and, chiefly, her time as First Lady. Kiely (2007) summed up Clinton's approach to responding to this particular constraint succinctly, asserting, "Clinton is about to begin her eighth year as a senator, but said she should also be judged on 'the public service that I have rendered long before I was in public office,' which included counseling her husband when he was in the White House and the Arkansas governor's mansion and as a legal advocate for underprivileged children" (para. 7-8). This strategy of including feminine ideals and expectations had worked well for Clinton in the past, in helping to transform her public image during her husband's second administration and also when running for the Senate (Corrigan, 2000; Gardetto, 1997; Kelly, 2001; Parry-Giles, 2000; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002; Trent & Short-Thompson, 2003). However, it also complicated her message. As is explained later in this section, her use of her time as First Lady in response to the constraint of experience carried with it damaging reminders of her husband's tumultuous terms as president, and her own challenges in the public arena. Additionally, since no woman had ever run a campaign for president utilizing this specific area of expertise to establish her qualifications, it was a risk to pin even part of her credibility on such experiences.

Indeed, Clinton's rhetoric espousing her experience and abilities did become complicated, somewhat convoluted, and at times, incredibly damaging, in terms of the news coverage tracking Clinton. Leibovich (2007) noted, "Mrs. Clinton's variously named events reflect a candidate striving to convince voters that a host of seemingly contradictory qualities can coexist in a single candidate: that she is an utterly familiar figure who is an agent of change; that she has already lived in the White House but that her election would be historic and unprecedented; that she is someone who is tough but also likable" (para. 10). This became especially true after Clinton's third place finish in Iowa, when, perceptually, Obama's message

of change won out over Clinton's claim of superior experience. Healy (2008a) wrote: "Clinton advisers declined to say Thursday night if she would now pursue a different strategy against Mr. Obama. But a shift seems likely now that Mrs. Clinton's multilayered, sometimes contradictory message—offering an experienced hand, for example, but also running as a candidate who could bring change—fell flat in this first contest" (para. 9). In this same article, Healy went on to quote John Edwards, who came in second in Iowa ahead of Clinton, who also seemed to sum up voters' disdain for Clinton's experience, highlighting this aspect of her rhetoric as a key constraint: "As Mr. Edwards put it, 'the status quo lost and change won' in the caucuses" (para. 23).

With an idea of the contextual elements of her rhetorical situation in mind, with regard to this particular constraint, it is necessary to now turn to Clinton's own rhetoric to understand how she was able to craft a fitting response that negotiated the particular constraint of experience. As is made clear from the following pages, Clinton's ability to use her experience as an argument that she was ready to lead was at times successful. However, because of gendered elements of her rhetorical situation, and the sources she chose to use to establish her experience, Clinton often fell short in responding to this particular constraint during the campaign.

Experience as Constraint in Clinton's Speeches

In examining Clinton's own rhetoric during the campaign, it is clear that experience won out over change as her governing mantra. One way that Clinton established her experience during her campaign speeches was by denoting her long, diverse career as evidence of her qualifications. Clinton (2007b) stated, "I am asking for your support based on my 35 years of work, my understanding of the changes that we need, my commitment to apply the persistence, the perseverance, and yes, the perspiration to get it done" (para. 11). She repeated this similar

phrase after the Iowa caucuses were completed: “I have done this work for 35 years. It is the work of my lifetime” (Clinton, 2008a, para. 9). Lines like these did well to remind voters of the many years she has served the public, but also reminded voters of her status as an insider in Washington politics—a qualification, unfortunately, that voters, en masse, seemed to reject in substantial ways as Obama’s campaign focused its’ rhetoric around the message of “change”. As the analysis in Chapter Three indicates, Clinton’s campaign also consistently used negative campaigning, subtle appeals to super delegates, and many of Bill Clinton’s closest advisors and campaign workers throughout the 2008 race, further entrenching the idea that Clinton was part of the Washington establishment. This meant, as is discussed in the third section of this chapter, a rejection not just of Republican control of politics, but a rejection of Clinton’s experience since it represented for many a substantive part of the problems with the political system in Washington. Thus, while she attempted to use her years of work in politics to adapt to this particular constraint, her argument was often turned against her as a reason to reject a Washington insider like Clinton for the Democratic nomination for president.

Another way that Clinton established her experience during her key campaign speeches was by enumerating the many activities, laws, and commissions that she had championed. Over the course of her key campaign speeches, Clinton would often use phrases such as “my vision for our country, my plans for change, and my ability to lead” to convince voters that she had not only a clear path to victory, but also a clear plan for what she would do with the presidency once elected (Clinton, 2007b, para. 8). She told voters in Iowa that she was a consistent supporter of individuals, resisting paths that would have led to personal benefit alone: “...for me that means that I started when I got out of law school, not going to work for a big corporate law firm but going to work for the Children’s Defense Fund” (2007b, para. 22). She also reminded voters that

she “helped to create the Children’s Health Insurance Program” (2007b, para. 29). Using rhetoric such as this to establish her qualifications also served the dual-purpose of establishing Clinton’s femininity on the trail. Her work on behalf of others, seemingly without any thoughts about her own personal gain, denoted the cooperative, integrative leadership approach Rosenthal (1998) has championed for female politicians, and it demonstrated Clinton’s predilection for championing not just popular, male-oriented issues, but also the more often over-looked or less-stressed “women’s” issues such as the protection of children. This, of course, did not mean that Clinton only championed “women’s issues.” As all presidential candidates must do, she also had to establish her experience and vision for dealing with typically masculine issues, and did so in her various key speeches. In Iowa, Clinton spoke about her plans to address tax cuts and her plans for the economy in general (Clinton, 2007b). In other speeches, Clinton also addressed her plans for and experience with energy policy, veterans’ rights, national security, and global terrorism (Clinton, 2008c). Because she needed to establish her experience as a candidate, as it was a central constraint on the trail, Clinton did well to emphasize her past experiences with and future plans for myriad “male” and “female” issues. These issues not only allowed her to garner experience and use this constraint to her advantage, it also allowed her to demonstrate a successful tactic for female politicians by taking a gender-balanced approach to talking about issues on the trail.

Another key ingredient to Clinton’s strategy as she dealt with the experience constraint was how she used her time as First Lady, first of Arkansas and then of the United States. In her key campaign speeches, Clinton claimed, “Arkansas students now have an education that was denied to previous generations and I am proud that I was part of making those changes as well” (Clinton, 2007b, para. 25). Clinton, also relying on her experience as First Lady of Arkansas,

asserted her leadership abilities by claiming, in terms of education reform, “This is something I have worked on for decades. I brought a program to Arkansas, the Home Instruction for Preschool Youngsters Program, that gave parents the tools they needed to help their own children” (2007b, para. 41). She also claimed, in Iowa, “I traveled to Beijing as First Lady on behalf of all of you, to stand up for a very simple proposition—that women’s rights are human rights and human rights are women’s rights” (2007b, para. 27). By establishing her experiences in this way, rather than simply relying on her experience in the Senate, Clinton was making two implied yet provocative arguments. First, Clinton’s discourse implied that the activities of a First Lady are substantive, and thus, can be utilized to establish the requisite experience for a presidential run. Second, she was implying that her experiences as First Lady, while often overshadowed by controversy, should be celebrated as beneficial for our nation.

Finally, two other inter-related elements of Clinton’s campaign speeches were also used to address experience and to counteract the gendered assumptions of voters that may mar a female candidate’s success. First, though she did this far more prominently in her debate performances, Clinton asserted her toughness, developed through past experiences, as evidence of her ability to lead. She argued in Iowa, “when I am elected, I will stand and fight for each and every one of you every single day” (2007b, para. 51). And after Super Tuesday, Clinton was even more direct and forceful: “Now we know the Republicans won’t give up the White House without a fight, well let me be clear, I won’t let anyone steal this country’s future” (2008c, para. 14). By asserting her toughness, she was arguing to voters that a woman can take on the masculine mantle of the presidency, while simultaneously and implicitly reminding voters that she has “been there and done that” in terms of being involved in tough political battles. As such, her toughness, from Clinton’s perspective, helped her to establish that she had the requisite

experience to assume the “manly” post of president and thus, bypass this constraint. Second, and in a very similar way, Clinton established the sufficiency of her experience by rhetorically establishing her readiness to lead as president “on day one.” She told crowds in Iowa, “Iowans have an awesome responsibility, especially this year. Because we have to make a decision that will not only help us figure out who will be the next democratic nominee, that’s important, but even more so, who is ready to be President and who is ready, willing, and able on Day One to do the job that we need done” (Clinton, 2007b, para. 5). Even after her third place finish in Iowa, Clinton still vowed, “I am so ready for the rest of this campaign and I am so ready to lead” (2008a, para. 10). In much the same way as she attempted to respond to the experience constraint through her rhetorical toughness, Clinton’s assertion that she, more so than her rivals, was ready to lead from the beginning of her presidency signaled to audience members that she indeed had the experience necessary to serve as president.

Experience as Constraint in Clinton’s Debate Performances

In much the same way as in her campaign speeches, Clinton used her debate performances to demonstrate her past activities as proof of her experience and ability to lead. In the South Carolina Democratic primary debate against just Obama and Edwards in January, Clinton noted, “We have to stimulate the economy. I began calling for some kind of economic action plan back at the beginning of December” (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 5). She asserted plainly later in this debate, in charging that Obama did not have specific plans in place to correct America’s problems, that she, in fact, did: “There is no evidence from your Web site, from your speeches, as to how you would pay for it. Now why is that important? It’s important because I think elections are about the future. But how do you determine what will happen in the future? Well, you have to look at the record, you have to look to what we say in

campaigns, and what we have done during our careers” (para. 103-104) suggesting that there was little in the Obama file to provide a clue. Later in this same debate, when Clinton was asked a question about her economic plans and a call for a moratorium on home foreclosures, she asserted, “I’ve been calling for action since last March” (para. 203). The message implicit in each of these remarks indicated to voters that Clinton, as opposed (allegedly) to her rivals, was ready to lead, and her past experiences had proven this. As such, by listing her successes with past policy initiatives, Clinton once again argued that her experience should not be a constraint for her candidacy; rather, it should be viewed by voters as an asset.

Clinton used a similar strategy during her first debate against only Obama in Los Angeles prior to Super Tuesday, and used the opportunity to demonstrate her experience when compared specifically with Obama’s. Clinton stated, when discussing immigration reform, “well, actually, I co-sponsored comprehensive immigration reform in 2004 before Barack came to the Senate... So I’ve been on record on behalf of this for quite some time” (“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 264-265). When the subject of revisiting America’s NAFTA agreements came up during the Cleveland debate in late February, Clinton was also quick to both attack Obama and also laud her own record: “Again, I have received a lot of incoming criticism from Senator Obama. And the Cleveland Plain Dealer examined Senator Obama’s attacks on me regarding NAFTA and said they were erroneous... I have a record of standing up for [our manufacturing industries], of chairing the Manufacturing Caucus in the Senate, and I will take a tough position on these trade agreements” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 85). Similarly, Clinton once again pointed out her long record of experience in the final debate of the primary in Philadelphia, when she argued, “I think year after year for now 35 years, I have a proven record of results” (“The Democratic Debate in Philadelphia,” 2008, para. 83).

Similarly, Clinton used her campaign debate performances to establish that she had specific plans and policies ready to enact were she elected president. In South Carolina, when facing Obama and Edwards, Clinton asserted, “I have a package of \$110 billion; \$70 billion that would go towards dealing with the mortgage crisis, which, unfortunately, I don’t think President Bush has really taken seriously enough” (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 5). Later in this debate, Clinton said even more explicitly, “And if we have a president who is willing from day one to make it a mission to create shared prosperity again, that’s going to be good for every American. And that’s what I’m going to offer as president. That’s what I’ve been talking about, that’s what I’ve been working for and that’s what I intend to do. And I think we can get results for every American” (para. 492).

One of the clearest examples of this strategy came in Clinton’s first debate against only Obama, wherein she was asked about her health care plan. After enumerating many of the failures with the current system of health insurance and care in the United States, Clinton continued to articulate her plan with incredible specificity:

We could do so much better. And here are some of the ideas that I have put on the table. Number one, the Bush administration has given enormous tax giveaways to HMOs and drug companies under the Medicare prescription Part D program, under the HMO program in Medicare. I would rein those in. They are not being earned. They do not produce the results that are supposedly being touted by the Bush administration. I would also move for electronic medical records, something that I have worked on for nearly five years on a bipartisan basis. Started with Newt Gingrich and Bill Frist. We passed my legislation through the Senate a year ago. Didn’t get it through the Republican House. Now we’re going to try again in the Democratic Congress. If we had electronic medical

records, according to RAND corporation—hardly a bastion of liberal thinking... (LAUGHTER)...they have said we would save \$77 billion a year. That money can be put into prevention. It could be put into chronic care management. It can be put into making sure that our health care system has enough access so that if you are in a rural community somewhere in California or somewhere in Tennessee or somewhere in Georgia, you'll have access to health care. If you are in an inner-city area and you see your hospital, like the Drew Medical Center, closed on you, then you are going to have a place once again where you can get health care in the immediate area. So we can begin to be more effective and more sensible about how we cover everybody and use the money from the top-end tax [cuts] and from modernizing the system ("Transcript of Thursday's," 2008, para. 182-188).

Clinton repeated this strategy in the Cleveland debate wherein she and Obama debated their respective health care plans for a significant portion of the time. Toward the end of this lengthy discussion, Clinton stated:

And under my plan, it is affordable because, number one, we have enough money in our plan. A comparison of the plans like the ones we're proposing found that actually I cover nearly everybody at a much lower cost than Senator Obama's plan because we would not only provide these health care tax credits, but I would limit the amount of money that anyone ever has to pay for a premium to a low percentage of your income. It will be affordable...I have the most aggressive measures to reduce costs and improve quality. And time and time again, people who have compared our two approaches have concluded that ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 50-52).

Clinton stressed her possession of specific plans to establish requisite experience in the final debate, as well, when she asserted once again, “And I hope that this evening, voters in Pennsylvania and others across the country will listen carefully to what we have to say, will look at our records, will look at the plans we have. And I offer those on my website, hillaryclinton.com, for more detail” (“Democratic Debate in Philadelphia,” 2008, para. 11-12). One of these plans she mentioned specifically later in this debate was how she would deal with the economy. Clinton asserted:

...I have a very specific plan of \$100 billion in tax cuts that would go to people to help people afford health care, security retirement plans...make it possible for people to get long-term health insurance and care for their parents and grandparents who they are trying to support, making college affordable and so much else...we might not be able to do all of that at once. But if you go to my website, HillaryClinton.com, it is laid out there how I will pay for everything, because everything I have proposed, I have put in how I would pay for it (para. 224-225).

Later on during this debate, Clinton added more details, and as she did, she again asserted how she was consistently on the forefront in offering plans and funding sources to deal with economic concerns. Clinton stated, “I was the first to come out with a strategic energy fund, where we needed to be investing in clean renewable energy” (para. 255). She also stated, “I want to see us actually tackle the housing crisis, something I’ve been talking about for over a year” (para. 257). Finally, during this last debate in Philadelphia, Clinton exhibited the same rhetorical strategy when she discussed energy independence. Clinton argued, “I would quit putting oil into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and I would release some to help drive the price down globally...We’ve got to have a long-term energy strategy...And I’ve laid out a comprehensive

plan to move us toward energy independence that I hope I will have the opportunity to implement as president” (para. 350-354).

Clinton also used her debate performances to establish her comfort in dealing with masculine issues as a component of her experience. When asked, during the first debate, about immigration reform, Clinton immediately tied the issue to national security and terrorism. Clinton argued, “Well, I’m in favor of comprehensive immigration reform, which includes tightening our border security, sanctioning employers [who] employ undocumented immigrants, helping our communities deal with the costs that come from illegal immigration, getting the 12 million or so immigrants out of the shadows. That’s very important to me. After 9/11, we’ve got to know who’s in this country” (“South Carolina Democratic,” 2007, para. 346-347). She continued with this specific line of argumentation later in the debate when asked whether or not Democrats could keep the country safe from terrorism than Republicans. Clinton asserted, “Well, Brian [Williams], I think that, as a senator from New York, it is something that I have worked on very hard ever since 9/11—to try to convince the administration to do those things that would make us safer. And I think there’s a big disconnect between the rhetoric and the reality” (para. 434). Again, in the same debate, Clinton responded to a question on terrorism with equal force: “Well, again, having been a senator during 9/11, I understand very well the extraordinary horror of that kind of an attack and the impact that it has, far beyond those that are directly affected. I think a president must move as swiftly as is prudent to retaliate...So let’s focus on those who have attacked us and do everything we can to destroy them” (para. 472-476). Clinton adopted a similar strategy in her first debate against just Obama and Edwards just days before the South Carolina primary: “I have the greatest admiration for the American military. I serve on the

Senate Armed Services Committee. I've been to Iraq three times. I've met with the leaders of the various factions" ("The Democratic Debate in South," 2008, para. 416).

Clinton continued this trend in the final Democratic primary debate; when she discussed the Iraq war once again, she argued, "And I am convinced that it is in America's best interest, it is in the best interest of our military, and I even believe it is in the best interest of Iraq, that upon taking office, I will ask the secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and my security advisers to immediately put together for me a plan so that I can begin to withdraw within 60 days" ("Democratic Debate in Philadelphia," 2008, para. 183). She continued, later in this same debate, to establish her ease in dealing with masculine issues, as she argued, "Our military will continue to be stretched thin, and our soldiers will be on their second, third, even their fourth deployment. And we will not be able to reassert our leadership and our moral authority in the world. And I think those are the kinds of broad issues that a president has to take into account" (para. 192-193).

In addition to demonstrating her ability to deal with masculine issues, Clinton also demonstrated her tenacity in dealing with men she might encounter as president as evidence of her experience. In her first debate against only Obama that took place shortly before Super Tuesday, Clinton noted:

It is imperative, though, that we actually plan and execute this right. And you may remember last spring, I got into quite a back-and-forth with the Pentagon, because I was concerned they were not planning for withdrawal, because that was contrary to their strategy, or their stated position. And I began to press them to let us know, and they were very resistant, and gave only cursory information to us. So I've said that I will ask the Joint Chiefs and the secretary of defense and my security advisers the very first day I'm

president to begin to draw up such a plan so that we can withdraw (“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 399-401).

During the debate in Cleveland, Clinton also mentioned international foes she might have to tangle with in a similar way: “I have long advocated a much tougher approach to Musharraf and to Pakistan, and I have pushed the White House to do that” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 135).

Similarly, in terms of stressing the sufficiency of her experience as a candidate for president, Clinton was determined to demonstrate her toughness and strength rhetorically. She claimed in Cleveland, “You know, 15 years ago I tangled with the health insurance industry and the drug companies, and I know it takes a fighter. It takes somebody who will go toe-to-toe with the special interests” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 203). Clinton also used the final debate in Philadelphia as an opportunity to demonstrate her toughness, asserting, “we need a fighter back in the White House” (“Democratic Debate in Philadelphia,” 2008, para. 372). Additionally, as she discussed her abilities to deal more successfully than Obama with a November matchup against John McCain, a requirement of any party’s nominee’s experience as a presidential contender, Clinton asserted, “I believe I’m the better and stronger candidate against Senator McCain, to go toe to toe with him on national security and on how to turn the economy around” (para. 65). During the last debate of the primary season, Clinton also added a discussion of terrorism and dealing with countries in the Middle East, asserting:

Of course I would make it clear to the Iranians than an attack on Israel would incur massive retaliation from the United States, but I would do the same with other countries in the region. You know, we are at a very dangerous point with Iran. The Bush policy has failed. Iran has not been deterred. They continue to try to not only obtain the fissile

material for nuclear weapons but they are intent upon and using their efforts to intimidate the region and to have their way when it comes to the support of terrorism in Lebanon and elsewhere...we cannot permit Iran to become a nuclear power (para. 207-212).

Clinton's concluding remarks during the Philadelphia debate also clearly asserted the persona of toughness that she sought to establish. Clinton argued, "So I will tell everyone who listens that I'm ready to be commander in chief. I've got 35 generals and admirals, including two former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Wesley Clark and others, who believe that I am the person to lead us out of Iraq, to take on Al Qaeda, to rebuild our military" (para. 377).

Interestingly, as she progressed into her final statements of the night, she continued this theme of toughness and the ability to fight but blended it to include a somewhat feminine undertone that signified nurturance and compassion. Clinton finished her closing statement, and argued, "And I hope that I have demonstrated not just over the last weeks or even the last hour and [a] half but over a lifetime that you can count on me. You know where I stand. You know that I will fight for you and that together we're going to take back our country" (para. 379).

To further mitigate the constraint of experience, just as it was during her campaign speeches, 'being ready to lead on day one' was also a common theme in her debate performances, as exemplified in the first primary debate in South Carolina wherein Clinton argued, "...the most important decision is who would be the best president on day one, to deal with all the problems that we know are waiting for our next president? And the subsidiary question is, who can best withstand the Republicans and all that we know is coming from them in order to win in November 2008? I believe strongly that I can make the best case for that" ("The Democratic Debate in South," 2008, para. 593-594). Just days before Super Tuesday, Clinton continued with this particular strategy in her first debate against just Obama, again

asserting that she, rather than Obama, would best be able to handle the problems facing Americans on day one:

...when the celebrations are over, the next president will walk into the Oval Office, and waiting there will be a stack of problems, problems inherited from a failed administration: a war to end in Iraq and a war to resolve in Afghanistan; an economy that is not working for the vast majority of Americans...tens of millions of people either without health insurance at all or with insurance that doesn't amount to much, because it won't pay what your doctor or your hospital need...an energy crisis we fail to act on at our peril; global warming, which the United States must lead in trying to contend with an reverse; and then all the problems that we know about and the ones we can't yet predict. It is imperative that we have a president, starting on day one, who can begin to solve our problems, tackle these challenges, and seize the opportunities that I think await...I think it's imperative we have a problem-solver, that we roll up our sleeves. I'm offering that kind of approach, because I think that Americans are ready once again to know that there isn't anything we can't do if we put our minds to it ("Transcript of Thursday's," 2008, para. 23-30).

By presenting her experience in this way so as to mitigate this specific constraint, or to even use the constraint of experience to her advantage, Clinton, while seemingly beating her opponent perceptually, was in actuality hurting her own chances for victory on two fronts. First, she was demonstrating her abilities to address issues that are conventionally gender-coded as masculine, which may have alienated voters. This was, on the surface, a wise strategy, given that any woman running for the most masculine of political offices would need to portray herself as able to deal with "masculine" issues such as the economy. Unfortunately, as evident from these

excerpts, Clinton was unwise to stress these specific masculine issues. Bystrom, et al. (2004) and Clift and Brazaitis (2000) noted that when women win elections, it is because they have balanced their approach to both masculine and feminine traits and issues, while stressing feminine issues and traits as a way to establish credibility and at the same time, not defying conventional gender expectations. Thus, because Clinton chose, especially in her debate performances, to balance her approach in discussing both masculine and feminine issues and possibly erred on the side of emphasizing masculine issues, she could easily have alienated a portion of her audience while trying to establish her experience. Second, Clinton's strategy of establishing her experience while also undercutting Obama's was, in effect, adding force to Obama's rhetorical mantra of "change" as is discussed in the third section of this chapter. For Clinton to win the experience battle, she had to demonstrate that she was, in effect, a member of the Washington establishment that Obama was arguing should be changed. Thus, as this initial discussion demonstrates, Clinton was, once again, locked in a double bind she could not escape by using traditional campaign strategies.

However, Clinton did use other rhetorical strategies during the debates to establish and emphasize her experience beyond the overtly masculine tactics examined above. For instance, Clinton used her time in the White House as First Lady as an almost constant source of establishing expertise during her key primary debates. From the very first debate, which included all eight of the initial Democratic candidates, when Clinton was asked a question about gun control in the wake of the Virginia Tech massacre, Clinton used her time as First Lady to demonstrate her experience with the subject. She stated, "I remember very well when I accompanied Bill to Columbine after that massacre and met with the family members of those who had been killed and talked with the students, and feeling that we had to do more to try to

keep guns out of the hands of the criminal and the mentally unstable. And during the Clinton administration, that was a goal..." ("South Carolina Democratic," 2007, para. 238-239). Her time working on health care during Bill Clinton's presidency was also used as a source of establishing experience. Later in this same debate, she answered a question about health care reform in this way: "Well, let me start by saying that all of the ideas that you're going to hear about in this campaign are very important to get out to the public so that people can actually think about them, examine how they would affect their lives because I do have the experience of having put forth a plan, with many of the features that John and Barack just mentioned" (para. 284).

Another clear example demonstrating this strategy came in Clinton's first debate against only Obama prior to the Texas and Ohio primaries and caucuses in early March. In this lengthy excerpt from the debate, Clinton touched on many subjects and noted several examples, drawing her audience's attention to one clear fact: her time as First Lady gave her experiences that were valuable as a presidential contender, again, in order to successfully address the rhetorical constraint of experience:

...certainly during the eight years that I was privileged to be in the White House, I had a great deal of responsibility that was given to me to not only work on domestic issues, like health care—and when we weren't successful on universal health care, I just turned around and said, well, we're going to get the Children's Health Insurance Program. And I'm so proud we do, because now six million children around the country every month get health care. And I took on the drug companies to make sure that they would test drugs to see if they were safe and effective for our kids...And certainly the work I was able to do around the world, going to more than 82 countries, negotiating with governments like

Macedonia to open up their border again, to let Kosovar refugees in. Speaking on behalf of women's rights as human rights in Beijing, to send a message across the world that this is critical of who we are as Americans ("Transcript of Thursday's," 2008, para. 318-321).

Similarly, directly before the Ohio and Texas contests in March, Clinton even more clearly extolled her work as First Lady as proof that she had the experience to lead the nation in the Cleveland debate:

[Co-Moderator] Brian Williams: Well, Senator Clinton, in the last debate you seemed to take a pass on the question of whether or not Senator Obama was qualified to be commander in chief. Is your contention in this latest speech that America would somehow be taking a chance on Senator Obama as commander in chief?

Sen. Clinton: Well, I have put forth my extensive experience in foreign policy, you know, helping to support the peace process in Northern Ireland, negotiating to open borders so that refugees fleeing ethnic cleansing would be safe, going to Beijing and standing up for women's rights as human rights and so much else ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 133-134).

Clinton, still answering the same question, finished her answer by adding:

So I think you've got to look at, you know, what I have done over a number of years, traveling on behalf of the country to more than 80 countries, meeting and working out a lot of different issues that are important to our national security and our foreign policy and our values, serving on the Senate Armed Services Committee for now five years... I will have a much better base to make on a range of issues that really America must

confront going forward, and will be able to hold my own and make the case for a change in policy that will be better for our country (para. 137).

Toward the end of this same debate, Clinton clarified her point more concisely: "...what I believe is that my experience and my unique qualifications on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue equip me to handle the problems of today and tomorrow and to be prepared to make those tough decisions in dealing with Putin and others because we have so much work to do..." (para. 274). And while Clinton here did make note of her Senate experience as also contributing to her ability to lead, she still balanced this against her experience in the White House as both equally contributing to her readiness.

Clinton repeated this strategy in her final debate against Obama, when she claimed: "But I know too that, you know, being able to rely on my experience of having gone to Bosnia, gone to more than 80 countries, having represented the United States in so many different settings gives me a tremendous advantage going into this campaign, particularly against Senator McCain" ("Democratic Debate in Philadelphia," 2008, para. 125). The use of her time as First Lady helped Clinton in a few ways in terms of the particular constraint of experience. First, it allowed her to embody traditional notions of femininity as she argued that she was qualified. Second, her discussion of her time as First Lady of the United States specifically reminded voters of her time in the White House, establishing an inherent connection to the office of the president. Finally, it allowed her to highlight her unique qualifications for the office, as she could stress the executive initiatives and the diplomatic efforts she had undertaken that could set her apart from her opponents who had only served in, aside from Governor Bill Richardson, legislative roles.

Still, Clinton's use of her time as First Lady to address this particular rhetorical constraint did not come without consequences. Obama regularly argued against this way of establishing

experience and accused Clinton of building up her experience beyond what it should be. A segment from the Cleveland debate demonstrates this issue succinctly:

Sen. Obama: (From videotape.) -- herself as co-president during the Clinton years. Every good thing that happened she says she was a part of. And so the notion that you can selectively pick what you take credit for and then run away from what isn't politically convenient, that doesn't make sense.

Mr. Williams: Now, Senator Obama, you can react to it and whatever you wanted to react to from earlier, but I've been wanting to ask you about this assertion that Senator Clinton has somehow cast herself as co-president.

Sen. Obama: Well, I think what is absolutely true is, is that when Senator Clinton continually talks about her experience, she is including the eight years that she served as first lady, and you know, often says, you know, 'Here's what I did.' 'Here's what we did.' 'Here's what we accomplished' -- which is fine. And I have not -- I have not in any way said that that experience is not relevant, and I don't begrudge her claiming that as experience. What I've said, and what I would continue to maintain, is you can't take credit for all the good things that happened but then, when it comes to issues like NAFTA, you say, well, I -- behind the scenes, I was disagreeing. That doesn't work. So you have to, I think, take both responsibility as well as credit ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 212-216).

Obama's strategy here was on target. As scholars who have studied the 2008 campaign indicated, Hillary Clinton was incredibly constrained by her invocation of her experience as First Lady (Schnoebelen, et al., 2009; Torrens, 2009). The use of this experience tied her to an ultimately feminine role, and at the same time, as demonstrated in the above excerpt from Obama, her

experiences as First Lady reminded voters of the “co-presidency” the Clintons had both emphasized while Bill Clinton was president—a label that caused many citizens to cringe at what seemed a way for a power-hungry woman to utilize the power of the presidency in an un-elected capacity, and to raise questions about the potential for another “co-presidency.” Thus, while Clinton should have emphasized her experience as First Lady as a contrast to her chief rival for the nomination (as they shared, in large part, roughly similar résumés as legislators and attorneys), it inadvertently tied her back to the negative reputation she had earned while her husband was president (as is examined in greater depth in the fourth section of this chapter), and did little to combat the constraint that she was, indeed, experienced enough to be president herself.

Given the sheer number of times it was mentioned during just the key speeches and debate performances, and the amount of her rhetoric apportioned to this particular issue, it is clear that establishing her past experiences as proof of her ability to lead as president was viewed by Clinton as a major constraint during her bid for the presidency. And, as noted throughout the preceding analysis, Clinton was both successful and unsuccessful in providing rhetoric that was a fitting response to this constraint.

On one hand, detailing the specific plans she would undertake, and the various areas, both masculine and feminine, was rhetorically wise for Clinton. As previously indicated in Chapter One, scholarship on leadership, and the presidency specifically, has indicated that effective leadership, especially presidential leadership, is inherently masculine in orientation (Bystrom, 2003b; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Han, 2003; Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993). Bem’s (1974; 1993) research reminds us that masculinity has traditionally been associated with the ability to get things done and pursue an instrumental orientation. Thus, in order to demonstrate that a

woman could, indeed, effectively serve as president, Clinton was smart to repeatedly list her accomplishments and to present detailed plans for her presidency for voters to counteract stereotypically negative beliefs regarding women.

On the other hand, as previously indicated, Clinton relied far too heavily on emphasizing her experience and comfort with male issues and traits, which runs counter the dominant political communication beliefs that women should balance their approaches or err on the side of emphasizing female traits and issues so as to not appear utterly unconventional as a candidate. Clearly, though Clinton did consistently rely on her time as a First Lady—an explicitly feminine role—used much more of her discourse to establish her competence with masculine issues and her possession of masculine traits. And as the next section of this chapter demonstrates, Clinton’s establishment of her expertise exacerbated another rhetorical constraint that plagued her rhetorical situation: her lack of likability and negative reputation as a public figure.

Perceptions of Clinton’s Reputation as Rhetorical Constraint

All parties involved in the 2008 Democratic presidential primary were aware of the obvious: Clinton was the best-known candidate among Democrats seeking the nomination. This awareness, early on, helped Clinton by catapulting her to the top of many early polls, and establishing her as the clear favorite among Democratic voters (Balz, 2007b). However, this knowledge of Clinton among her opponents and among voters was a double-edged sword. Since Clinton was the best known, Nagourney (2006) noted “Almost without exception, [Clinton’s Democratic opponents in the campaign] have approached this race with the same strategy: to try to emerge as the alternative to Mrs. Clinton and to take advantages of substantial reservations in Democratic circles about her potential to win the White House” (para. 8). Her opponents harped on Clinton’s reputation, firmly established in the American psyche after many years in the public

eye, complicating Clinton's rhetorical response during the campaign. Specifically, Clinton's reputation as a rhetorical constraint can be boiled down to two primary factors working against her during the primary campaign: the perception of her privacy or lack of self-disclosure—which could be interpreted as a lack of transparency—and the perception that Clinton was, simply, not likable enough to vote for.

An image of Clinton's private, almost insulated world, and the subsequent negative perception of such privacy, was a common theme perpetuated by news sources from the beginning of the campaign. In the prelude to her campaign announcement, Clinton was reported to have had several private meetings with influential Democrats, much to the chagrin of several voters she would later be courting. Healy and Nagourney (2007) reported in the *New York Times* that Clinton often appeared to be “surrounded by an insular circle of longtime advisers and friends who are detached from many of the grass-roots Democrats who have grown in influence since the last time a Clinton ran for president” (para. 7).

Obama also made several jibes during the campaign toward Clinton, as widely reported in news sources, that also perpetuated this appearance of privacy. Leibovich (2007) reported, “As he drills into specifics, Mr. Obama's critique of Mrs. Clinton becomes plainer. He said deliberations of his health care legislation would not take place ‘in back rooms,’ a reference to Mrs. Clinton's failed initiative in the 1990s, for which she was roundly slammed as being too secretive” (para. 22).

The belief that Clinton was a deeply private person, perpetuated in news media sources, complicated her appearance of likability. An excerpt from the *New York Times* demonstrates the last tenet of this specific constraint that haunted Clinton's rhetorical performance during the primary:

Even in low moments, Mrs. Clinton has been a picture of steely public composure. She has rarely, if ever, seemed to let herself go. Not when her health care initiative failed. Not the first time the world found out about her husband's marital misconduct. Not the second time either. In contrast, Mrs. Clinton's challengers for the Democratic presidential nomination have been emotionally accessible. Senator Barack Obama wrote about his absent father in "Dreams From My Father" and about quarreling with his wife in "The Audacity of Hope." John Edwards, the former senator from North Carolina, is the star of a long-running, heart-rending family drama: he lost his son in a car accident and has a wife with incurable cancer and he discusses all of it with seeming ease. In contrast, Mrs. Clinton has meted out her inner life one teaspoon at a time: a suggestive line in an interview here, a hearty laugh there (Kantor, 2008a, para. 2-5).

Even Clinton's own supporters acknowledged that her likability was going to be an issue potentially impeding her nomination, as demonstrated by Balz (2007b):

But many Democrats say she will have to work to overcome skepticism about her candidacy inside her party. 'Can [voters] finally see the reality of Hillary Clinton, not the myth of Hillary Clinton?' said Mickey Kantor, who was commerce secretary in the Clinton administration and supports the senator's candidacy. 'The money will be there...The experienced people will be there. All those things she will have. But the image [is something] she will have to turn around in some parts of the country' (para. 18).

Kornblut and Cohen (2007) echoed this perception, noting that Clinton "appears more vulnerable on questions of character...she is [viewed as] not sufficiently candid" (para. 9).

At times, the picture of Clinton's likability was actually presented in a positive light by the press, but with clear, unmistakable reminders of the fact that Clinton had to depict herself in certain ways so as to avoid an unlikable persona. Hornaday (2007) writing about Clinton's announcement video, commented, "The aesthetic sophistication suited Clinton, who, as a former First Lady and a U.S. senator, would look hopelessly out of place in most other contexts...and the look and the script warmed up a woman portrayed as either an amoral ice queen or control-freak dragon lady by her political opponents" (para. 5). Indeed, Clinton's likability (or lack thereof) was a key feature of many news stories during the campaign, acknowledging that Clinton had to repair this image if she were to capture her party's nomination. During her early campaign efforts in Iowa, Healy (2007d) noted, "At some events this week, the clear message was: I am a caring person; I care about you. At other events, it was attack, attack, attack (against Barack Obama in particular). Naughty, nice, naughty, nice" (para. 7).

Clinton was probably most successful in combating the image of being unlikable in New Hampshire when, on the eve of the primary there, she visibly broke down in front of the audience and 'cried.' As previously indicated in the analysis of Clinton's audience in Chapter Three, this situation allowed Clinton to humanize her public persona, though not without controversy (as many had speculated as to whether or not the misty eyes were faked by Clinton to gain favor among her audience members). Regardless of the actual details of the event, the situation did help Clinton combat her lack of likability among some, and she was quick to capitalize on the event to try and turn it to her favor. She told the *New York Times*, "It was just so touching when this woman asked, 'Well, what about you?' ...I just don't think about that, I think about what I can do for other people. I have spent a lifetime trying to help others; I'm very other-directed. That's maybe why people don't get me in the political world'" (Healy, 2008b,

para. 9). As Clinton's quotation indicated, she was cognizant of the fact that a majority of voters did not, indeed, "get" her. As a powerful political woman seeking even more power as she sought to become president, she often seemed too harsh, shrill, and unfeminine as a woman. Consequently, Clinton seemed well aware of the fact that she needed to demonstrate her femininity (or at least her likability) to combat the negative perceptions garnered from the reputation she had earned from her years involved in national politics, bolstering the argument that her reputation was, in fact, a core constraint she faced on the trail.

Other news sources were relentless in questioning Clinton's likability, demonstrating the pessimism about Clinton's chances that was likely in the minds of many voters who viewed her unfavorably. A comment from one of Maureen Dowd's articles for the *New York Times* clarified this pessimism, and points out how clearly Clinton's likability was a constraint during the primary campaign: "She won her Senate seat after being embarrassed by a man. She pulled out New Hampshire and saved her presidential campaign after being embarrassed by another man. She was seen as so controlling when she ran for the Senate that she had to be seen as losing control, as she did during the Monica scandal, before she seemed soft enough to attract many New York voters" (Dowd, 2008, para. 5). Dowd continued in the same article to present one of the most hyperbolic yet seemingly accurate assessments of the debate over Clinton's likability during the campaign:

Bill [Clinton] churlishly dismissed the Obama phenomenon as 'the biggest fairy tale I've ever seen,' but for the last few days, it was Hillary who seemed in danger of being Cinderella. She became emotional because she feared that she had reached her political midnight, when she would suddenly revert to the school girl with geeky glasses and frizzy hair, smart but not the favorite. All those years in the shadow of one Natural, only

to face the prospect of being eclipsed by another Natural? How illuminating to have a moderator of the New Hampshire debate ask her to explain why she was not as popular as the handsome young prince from Chicago. How demeaning to have Obama rather ungraciously chime in: ‘you’re likable enough.’ And how exasperating to be pushed into an angry rebuttal when John Edwards played wingman, attacking her on Obama’s behalf (para. 11-12).

Note that Dowd fails to consider that Clinton’s display was due to genuine emotion about public service; arguing, rather, that it was based on the perception that Clinton was emotionally responding to the possibility of losing her political dream. Regardless of the truth of the matter, the moment was significant. And it wasn’t significant solely because it came from a presidential candidate—it was significant because it was *this* presidential candidate. Kantor (2008a) explained: “Also remarkable about the reaction [to Clinton’s ‘tears’ in New Hampshire] was how much weight the commenters attached to Mrs. Clinton’s comments. After a year’s worth of speeches and debates, several new biographies and reams of journalism, the truth about what sort of person Hillary Clinton is—how genuine, how altruistic—seemed to come down to a few minutes of tape for some voters. It seemed to prove, once again, what might be called the Queen Elizabeth rule: the less emotion a leader shows, the more importance will be attached to those rare flashes of it” (para. 19). Understanding this rule, Clinton remarked after the fact, “‘If you get too emotional, that undercuts you...A man can cry; we know that. Lots of our leaders have cried. But a woman, it’s a different kind of dynamic’” (Dowd, 2008, para. 13). In response to Clinton’s ‘tearing up’ in New Hampshire, and as if in justification of Clinton’s comments afterward, John Edwards had attacked Clinton, arguing, “‘I think what we need in a commander in chief is

strength and resolve, and presidential campaigns are tough business, but being president of the United States is also tough business”” (Kornblut, 2008, para. 11-12).

Another story on the trail that severely hampered Clinton’s rhetorical abilities to transform her negative image during the campaign, occurred in mid-March when Clinton was speaking about her foreign policy experience at George Washington University. During this speech she asserted that when she had traveled with her daughter to Bosnia in 1996, she had dodged sniper fire upon exiting the airplane, most likely in an effort to “bolster her argument that she [had] the foreign policy experience needed to be commander in chief” (Duke, et al., 2008, para. 8). In the week following Clinton’s remarks about her trip to Bosnia, it was discovered and widely reported by several news organizations that Clinton’s claims had been totally false, and that video documentation of her arrival in Bosnia contradicted her account of the experience. After the reports about Clinton’s actual arrival surfaced, Clinton responded by arguing, “I say a lot of things—millions of words a day—so if I misspoke, that was just a misstatement”” (Duke, et al., 2008, para. 5). However, as she had mentioned similar stories about sniper fire in previous speeches, and as the story that she had lied about her trip to Bosnia had been run worldwide, the damage to her credibility had been done. Clinton’s Bosnia gaffe, in other words, became yet another sore spot for the candidate as she sought to reform her negative reputation; it mitigated her attempts to convey warmth and an honest persona, a conventionally feminine characteristic, and it perpetuated the need for Clinton to address this rhetorical constraint through her discourse. And as the analysis of her campaign rhetoric demonstrates later, this specific incident would come back to haunt her in terms of reforming her reputation.

If not for Obama being her lead opponent in the primary race, with his effective and inspirational oratorical skill and his perceptible charisma, Clinton may not have had nearly as

tough a time proving her likability. But Obama was her central opponent, and his palpable likability was a stark contrast to the doubts about Clinton's. Obama, in contrast to Clinton, was perceived as real—as authentic (Williams, 2008). More than this, Obama was inspirational. “Campaign worker A. J. Weiss said he reached some Clinton voters ‘who politely declined to talk,’ but ‘a lot of people that did want to talk (about Obama) were truly inspired, I think, by the senator’” (Moore, 2008, para. 14). The day after Super Tuesday, a volunteer for Obama's campaign, Tyler Bush, also told the *USA Today*, “‘in the last week there's been a definite surge. People you talk to on the street, they're jumping on the bandwagon...’ He decided to vote for Obama after learning of his work as a community organizer helping laid-off steelworkers in Gary, Ind., near Bush's home. ‘I've been looking for a leader for a long time, and he's that guy,’ Bush said (Moore, 2008, para. 15-16). Another Obama supporter in South Carolina stated, “‘there was something about Senator Obama that I found really fresh and exciting...I like how positive he has been’” (Leibovich, 2008, para. 32). Typical characteristics used by voters to describe Clinton, on the other hand, were not quite as inspirational. She was, as reported in new sources, described as destructively negative and polarizing (Leibovich, 2008; “Super Tuesday voters,” 2008).

Further complicating Clinton's rhetoric, when news reporters and political pundits alike had struggled to characterize the key ingredient behind Obama's appeal to voters in terms of likability, it was described as a movement—a movement that was lacking as a force behind Clinton's campaign. As the Democratic primary drew to a close, Hirshman (2008a) described the difference between Obama and Clinton succinctly:

...it's something less analyzable. When faced with a ‘movement,’ resistance is costly.

And for weeks now, online and cable news channels, almost anyone who expresses

criticism of Obama or support for Clinton has elicited a firestorm of disapproval.

Obama's scores of defenders—'Obamabots,' they're called—immediately recite the anti-Clinton litany: Billary, Monica Lewinsky, Hillary's Iraq vote, identity politics. Well-regarded activists such as Planned Parenthood's Feldt or successful writers such as Tina Fey who support Clinton are excoriated as worthless pieces of nonsense. After [Gloria] Steinem wrote an op-ed on Clinton's behalf in the New York Times, the New Republic published an article titled 'Gloria Steinem's Awful Op Ed.' Not misguided. But 'awful' (para. 19-20).

As the previous excerpt demonstrated clearly, and as the analysis in Chapter Three indicates, Hillary Clinton was facing a tremendous uphill battle in terms of appealing to voters because of the constraint posed by her reputation. Thus, given the complications she faced as she attempted to appeal to voters and deal with this specific constraint (and the distinct lack of warmth and likability that have characterized her reputation), Clinton had to strategically frame her rhetoric to make herself appear more genuine and feminine as a candidate. And as the following analysis demonstrates, while Clinton was aware of this constraint, she was largely unsuccessful in addressing it effectively, or using it to her advantage, in her campaign discourse.

Reputation as Constraint in Clinton's Speeches

Clinton seemed cognizant of her negative reputation, and specifically, the perception that she was unlikable, from the very beginning of her campaign. As the analysis in Chapters Three and Four demonstrates, Clinton began her campaign in a very conversational way, accentuating both her femininity and her willingness to personally converse with voters as well as her awareness of her status as the front-runner for the nomination. However, while Clinton *could* approach her campaign in an initially conversational manner because of her dominant status on

the trail early on, it is more likely that she was *compelled* to craft her rhetoric in this way to specifically counter the constraint caused by her poor reputation as a person, and her own perceived lack of femininity. In the video announcement that launched her campaign, she stated, “So let’s talk. Let’s chat. Let’s start a dialogue about your ideas and mine” because, as presidential candidate Hillary Clinton (as opposed to Senator Hillary Clinton or former First Lady Hillary Clinton), she had to (Clinton, 2008a, para. 11). Beginning her campaign in this manner allowed Clinton to embody some of the positive stereotypes about how women communicate, allowing her to reach out to those who were skeptical about her warmth. Additionally, the proposition that she wanted to begin a ‘conversation’ with America was in keeping with Helgesen’s (1995) contention that women should “emphasize relationships with people” (p. 28). It also demonstrated that Clinton approached the presidential campaign in a different, non-traditional way compared to her male opponents, demonstrating the positive “apolitical above-it-all demeanor” that successful female politicians have been said to embody in the past (Witt, et al., 1994, p. 215). Also, beginning her campaign in this way allowed Clinton to embody many of the positive characteristics of female leaders, like the ability to work effectively with others and a hands-on approach to leadership (Epstein, et al., 1998; Rosenthal, 1998b; Tolleson-Rinehart, 2001). Thus, from the beginning of her campaign, Clinton was attempting to counteract the constraint posed by her lack of likability through her use of rhetoric.

Clinton, in other speeches on the trail, also attempted to demonstrate her warmth, and asserted that she was also able to help millions of people in her various endeavors, though the tone was clearly set to establish warmth and kindness rather than solely her leadership experience, as discussed in the previous section. In Iowa, Clinton (2007b) stated, “I found children who were blind, children who were deaf, children in wheelchairs, children with other

kinds of disabilities. There was no place for them in beautiful schools like this. So I worked with many others to change the law, to make it possible for children with disabilities to get a public education and I was proud to be part of making change that helped millions and millions of Americans” (para. 23). Later in this speech, Clinton also asserted, “And I want, as president, to inspire more philanthropy, to get more Americans involved in helping their neighbors” (para. 28).

Clinton’s speeches also reminded her audience of times in the past when she was popular, or perceived in a warmer way, such as when she wrote her book *It Takes a Village* (Clinton, 2007b). Several previous studies demonstrated that Clinton was able to successfully repair her public image by engaging in certain rhetorical activities such as writing her book *It Takes a Village*, and speaking on behalf of women’s rights in Beijing (Anderson, 2002; Parry-Giles & Blair, 2002; Vavrus, 2002). When Clinton engaged in these types of activities in the past, she was largely able to overcome, rhetorically, the negative public impressions that citizens held; thus, reminding voters of these aspects of her time as First Lady could have helped to mitigate her lack of warmth and likability. What was lacking in her campaign for president, though, was a new example to drive the point home that she was likeable.

Another way Clinton attempted to bypass the constraint posed by her negative reputation, as previously analyzed in Chapter Three, was through her use of specific examples in her discourse. In Iowa, Clinton devoted a significant portion of her speech to one such example, demonstrating not only her attempts to reach certain demographics, but also her awareness of this constraint. Clinton (2007b) stated:

I was in Winterset two weeks ago and there was a man there and a woman in a wheelchair and the man was standing behind her with his hands on the back of the

wheelchair. Occasionally he would reach over and give her a drink, occasionally wipe her mouth. And I called on him when question time came. He told me that he and his wife had been married for 50 years, that she's had Parkinson's for 29 years and it got increasingly more difficult to care for her, he tried to get long-term care insurance, nobody would help him with his wife. All he's looking for is a little bit of help. He wants to take care of her, they've been together a really long time. But it's going to be hard if he doesn't get help at all. When I'm president we're going to provide help to loving family members like him and so many others who are doing the right thing (para. 36-37).

Additionally, as previously articulated in Chapter Four, one of Clinton's chief exigencies was asserting the Bush Administration's tendency to view most Americans as 'invisible'; this rhetorical device was also used to establish Clinton's warmth during the campaign. After Super Tuesday, Clinton (2008c) argued:

I see an America where we stand up to the oil companies and the oil producing countries, where we launch a clean energy revolution and finally confront the climate crisis. I see an America where we don't just provide health care for some people, or most people, but for every single man, woman, and child in this country—no one left out. I see an America where when a young man or woman signs up to serve our country, we sign up to serve them too... That's the America I see—that's the America we will build together (para. 15-18).

Finally, Clinton's speeches also included assertions that she had acted, and will continue to act, in a spirit of bipartisanship, designed to decrease the perception that she was not warm or that she was politically divisive. Clinton, speaking in Iowa, claimed, "In the Senate, I have worked across the aisle to make change... I immediately went to work, expanding economic

opportunities in our rural areas for our farmers in our small towns. Working across the aisle with Republicans to get health care for our National Guard and Reserve members who didn't have it... Working to make sure that despite the differences we have in philosophy or ideology, that we cannot let partisanship stand in the way of improving the lives of the people in our country" (2007b, para. 31-32).

If one only looked at Clinton's key speeches during the campaign, the perception that she was successful in her attempts to counteract the constraint posed by her negative reputation may appear to be a logical conclusion to draw. However, Clinton's speeches should not be analyzed in a vacuum for any constraint, let alone this specific one. After all, her campaign speeches are where Clinton had complete dominion over her message and tone, unencumbered by the rival messages of her opponents or naysayers. Her campaign speeches indicate that Clinton was aware of her reputation, and as such, she chose specific places in each of these speeches to rectify this image and bypass this constraint in her rhetorical situation. However, as becomes clear in the next section, Clinton's debate performances demonstrate a rhetor who did, indeed, have significant problems in proving her warmth and likability on a number of occasions.

Reputation as Constraint in Clinton's Debate Performances

Clinton, in much the same way as she did in her campaign speeches, also used her debate performances (at least her early ones) to demonstrate her caring nature, and her willingness to work with opponents so as to bypass or refute this particular constraint. In the South Carolina primary debate wherein Clinton debated only Obama and Edwards, Clinton devoted a large portion of one of her responses to this end:

Well, I respect John's commitment to ending poverty. That's why, 35 years ago, when I graduated from law school, I didn't go to work for a law firm. I went to work for Marion

Wright Edelman at the Children's Defense Fund, because ending poverty—particularly ending poverty for children, has been the central core cause of everything that I've been doing for 35 years. I care deeply about what for me is a mission and it does infuse everything that I do and why I'm in public office and why before I was in public service, chairing the Legal Services Corporation so that people got free legal aid when they would otherwise be put out of the courthouse, standing up time and time again for health care and education for abused and neglected kids and kids in the foster care system ("The Democratic Debate in South," 2008, para. 488-489).

Later in this debate, Clinton used the date of the occasion (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day) to extend this maternal persona and acknowledge her own opportunities, implying that she would act to establish and preserve such opportunities for others:

Well, there is no doubt that change comes from the extraordinary efforts of the American people. I've seen it in my life. I'm sitting here as a result of that change... The American people should not have to work so hard to get leaders who will actually help them and recognize we are strongest when we lead by our values. Dr. King transformed the lives of so many of us, and I intend to do whatever I can to make his legacy real in the lives of Americans (para. 619-623).

The above excerpts once again depicted a candidate who was aware of the constraint posed by her negative reputation, and was acting rhetorically to assuage fears about her lack of warmth and divisiveness.

On January 31, Clinton, in her first debate against only Obama before Super Tuesday (February 5), also addressed issues relevant to this constraint; in this case, her perceived penchant for privacy and a lack of openness or warmth. When Wolf Blitzer commented,

“Senator Clinton, we remember in ’93, when you were formulating your health care plan, it was done in secret,” Clinton attempted to refute the premise of Blitzer’s implied argument, when she stated, “Well, it was an effort to try to begin this conversation, which we’re now continuing. It has been a difficult conversation. There have been a lot of efforts. And I’m proud that one of the efforts I was involved in 10 years ago resulted in the Children’s Health Insurance Program. We now have a million children in California...who every month get health insurance because of that bipartisan effort” (“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 132-136). In approaching this specific constraint in this way, Clinton not only took the opportunity to establish her credibility and experience, she did so in a way to make it appear as if there was an altruistic motive behind her secrecy, again to prove that she was a caring person who had done her best to help others.

Another way in which Clinton attempted to bypass the constraint posed by her negative reputation was in presenting herself in a maternal way, acting as a champion who sought to protect the “invisible.” Clinton, in the very first Democratic primary debate, lambasted Bush and acted maternally in critiquing Bush’s plan to help the economy. Clinton argued, “Everything we know about President’s Bush’s plans would leave 50 million to 70 million Americans out, because a lot of our seniors on fixed incomes don’t pay income taxes. But that doesn’t mean they’re immune from the energy costs and health care costs and everything else that’s going up around them...President Bush’s plan would do nothing to help them” (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 10-11). Clinton continued this strategy in her first debate against only Obama later in the campaign before Super Tuesday, when she asserted, “And I really spent a great deal of my early adulthood, you know, bringing people together to help solve the problems of those who were without a voice and were certainly powerless” (“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 315). Later in this same debate, when asked about her Iraq strategy, Clinton again

attempted to take an overtly masculine issue and feminize her response, accentuating a caring, maternal demeanor:

...it's clear that if I had been president, we would never have diverted our attention from Afghanistan. When I went to Afghanistan the first time and was met by a young soldier from New York, in the 10th Mountain Division who told me that I was being welcomed to the forgotten war against terror, that just, you know, just struck me so forcefully. We have so many problems that we are going to have to untangle. And it will take everyone—it will take a tremendous amount of effort (para. 490-491).

Clinton continued her maternal, nurturing approach during the debate in Cleveland; she asserted, “I want to get that money back and invest it in the middle class—health care, college affordability, the kinds of needs that people talk to me about throughout Ohio, because what I hear...is the same litany that people are working harder than ever, but they’re not getting ahead. They feel like they’re invisible to their government” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 204). Finally, Clinton also continued this theme of nurturance and maternal care in her last debate against Obama. At the beginning of her closing statement, Clinton asserted, “And I have a plan to take away \$55 billion of the giveaways and the subsidies that the president and Congress have lavished on the drug companies and the oil companies and the insurance companies and Wall Street. And I have a plan to give that money back—give it back in tax cuts to the middle class—people who deserve it, who have been struggling under this president, who feel invisible, who feel like, you know, they’re not seen anymore” (“Democratic Debate in Philadelphia,” 2008, para. 373).

A final, less oft-used way that Clinton attempted to correct the divisiveness people perceived that she embodied was by asserting her ability to work collectively with others. During

her last debate against Obama, Clinton discussed the Washington, D.C. ban on handguns. She asserted, “You know, more than one person, on average, a day is murdered in Philadelphia. And Mayor Nutter is very committed, as the mayor of this great city, to try to do what he can to stem the violence. And what I said is what I have been saying, that I will be a good partner, for cities like Philadelphia, as president” (“Democratic Debate in Philadelphia,” 2008, para. 296). This particular approach was helpful to Clinton, as it provided a contrast to the predominant opinions that she was partisan and, at times, even vindictive in her approach to policy change (i.e. health care reform). However, appeals like these were too few in number to contradict this aspect of the constraint posed by her reputation.

Indeed, though it is clear that Clinton attempted to craft portions of her discourse in order to combat the negative reputation she had as a politician (and a *female* politician, specifically), Clinton was unable to completely mitigate charges against her openness and warmth. First, her ‘errors’ in talking about Bosnia, in many ways, irrevocably hampered her abilities to effectively deal with this constraint. This particular issue was critical, primarily because it was present, though the gaffe occurred several weeks earlier, in the last debate of the primary season. The transcript points out several revealing aspects of the long-ranging implications of Clinton’s “error”:

Mr. Stephanopoulos: Senator Clinton, we also did a poll today, and there are also questions about you raised in this poll. About six in 10 voters that we talked to say they don't believe you're honest and trustworthy. And we also asked a lot of Pennsylvania voters for questions they had. A lot of them raised this honesty issue and your comments about being under sniper fire in Bosnia.

Here's Tom Rooney from Pittsburgh.

Q Senator, I was in your court until a couple of weeks ago. How do you reconcile the campaign of credibility that you have when you've made those comments about what happened getting off the plane in Bosnia, which totally misrepresented what really happened on that day? You really lost my vote. And what can you tell me to get that vote back?

Senator Clinton: Well, Tom, I can tell you that I may be a lot of things, but I'm not dumb. And I wrote about going to Bosnia in my book in 2004. I laid it all out there. And you're right. On a couple of occasions in the last weeks I just said some things that weren't in keeping with what I knew to be the case and what I had written about in my book. And, you know, I'm embarrassed by it. I have apologized for it. I've said it was a mistake. And it is, I hope, something that you can look over, because clearly I am proud that I went to Bosnia. It was a war zone... So I will either try to get more sleep, Tom, or, you know, have somebody who, you know, is there as a reminder to me. You know, you can go back for the past 15 months. We both have said things that, you know, turned out not to be accurate. You know, that happens when you're talking as much as we have talked. But you know, I'm very sorry that I said it. And I have said that, you know, it just didn't jibe with what I had written about and knew to be the truth ("Democratic Debate in Philadelphia," 2008, para. 120-127).

This section of the debate transcript is telling in many ways; it points out the fact that Clinton's previous misstatement regarding Bosnia proved costly in terms of votes and mitigating her negative reputation. This segment of the debate transcript also indicates another constraint posed by the press, in that news reporters, weeks after Clinton apologized for the error, were still

compelled to bring up the issue. Finally, it showed a lack of comfort on Clinton's part in addressing the issue.

Still, the next few paragraphs from the transcript of this debate was even more telling of Clinton's problems caused by the Bosnia gaffe—the fact that Obama would take the high road on the issue, even when baited by the news media:

Mr. Stephanopoulos: Senator Obama, your campaign has sent out a cascade of e-mails, just about every day, questioning Senator Clinton's credibility. And you yourself have said she hasn't been fully truthful about what she would do as president. Do you believe that Senator Clinton has been fully truthful about her past?

Senator Obama: Well, look, I think that Senator Clinton has a strong record to run on. She wouldn't be here if she didn't. And you know, I haven't commented on the issue of Bosnia. You know, I --

Mr. Stephanopoulos: Your campaign has.

Senator Obama: Of course, but --

Senator Clinton: (Laughs.)

Senator Obama: Because we're asked about it. But look, the fact of the matter is, is that both of us are working as hard as we can to make sure that we're delivering a message to the American people about what we would do as president. Sometimes that message is going to be imperfectly delivered, because we are recorded every minute of every day. And I think Senator Clinton deserves, you know, the right to make some errors once in a while. I'm—obviously, I make some as well. I think what's important is to make sure that we don't get so obsessed with gaffes that we lose sight of the fact that this is a defining moment in our history (“Democratic Debate in Philadelphia,” 2008, para. 128-137).

Obama's response here was telling of Clinton's rhetorical constraint regarding her negative reputation. As the above excerpt exemplifies, Obama was often much more apt to navigate precarious situations during the debate in which he could have been perceived as attacking or mudslinging. He was able, because of his cool demeanor during the debates, to craft his rhetoric in such a way to escape such perceptions while he still made sure that the issue was featured in the debate to Clinton's detriment. Thus, Obama seemed to embody the previously discussed 'a-political, above-it-all demeanor' valuable to women in politics, while Clinton was still flailing, rhetorically, as she scrambled to form a sufficient response to the constraint posed by her lack of warmth and likability.

On the other hand, Clinton's quest to establish herself as warm and caring was, oddly enough, sometimes helped by some news reporters in the key primary debates. Kornblut (2009b) argued that the press coverage during the 2008 campaign cycle was incredibly sexist. And previous scholarship has also indicated that the press unfairly biases their reporting of politics against women (Braden, 1996; Duerst-Lahti, 2006; Witt, et al., 1994) But rather than simply short-changing Clinton in terms of the amount or content of coverage, some of the news reporters who acted as moderators for the debates seemed to attack or short-change Clinton. This may have helped soften her image, making her appear more sympathetic. In the first debate between only Clinton and Obama before Super Tuesday, Clinton was asked a series of questions about her Iraq vote and her plans to end the war. At one point, Wolf Blitzer interrupted Clinton in a telling exchange:

Clinton: ... We had to fight to get body armor. You know, George Bush sent people to war without body armor.

Blitzer: So what I—what I...

Clinton: We need a president who will be sensitive to the implications of the use of force and understand that force should be a last resort, not a first resort.

Blitzer: So, what I hear you saying—and correct me if I’m wrong—is that you were naïve in trusting President Bush?

Clinton: No, that’s not what you heard me say,

(AUDIENCE BOOING)

Clinton: Good try, Wolf. Good try. You know...

Blitzer: Was she naïve, Senator Obama?...

Clinton: You know, I think that, you know, that is a good try, Wolf.

(LAUGHTER) (“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 494-504).

Still, when Clinton would comment on these moments of possible bias by the moderators, her commentary was not always well received. The example previously analyzed in Chapter Three, wherein Clinton commented on the inequality the moderators had showed her because she was consistently asked the first question on many of the debate topics, demonstrated that while some audience members responded favorably to her criticism of the reporters, others did not. Clinton’s responses to the moderators in terms of this specific constraint could have worked to Clinton’s advantage, to both draw laughter amongst the crowd as well as to highlight the inequality of her treatment, but as the notations within the quotations in both of these transcript excerpts indicate, her audience responded both with laughter and booing.

Predominantly, analysis of the key debate performances indicates the press did not always help Clinton during the debates as she sought to deal with this specific constraint. In fact, some reporter/moderators overtly impeded her ability to be warm, or even clear, in answering questions. The late Tim Russert of NBC news was, arguably, Clinton’s major source of ire

during any of the debates. During the Cleveland debate, shortly before the March 4th Ohio and Texas primaries and caucuses, one exchange between Russert and Clinton demonstrated the challenge posed by Russert for Clinton in terms of this constraint:

Sen. Clinton: I have said that I will renegotiate NAFTA, so obviously, you'd have to say to Canada and Mexico that that's exactly what we're going to do. But you know, in fairness—

Mr. Russert: Just because—maybe Clinton—

Sen. Clinton: Yes, I am serious.

Mr. Russert: You will get out. You will notify Mexico and Canada, NAFTA is gone in six months.

Sen. Clinton: No, I will say we will opt out of NAFTA unless we renegotiate it, and we renegotiate on terms that are favorable to all Americans... You know, Senator Obama told the farmers of Illinois a couple of years ago that he wanted more trade agreements. I—right now—

Mr. Russert: We're going to get—we're going to get to Senator Obama, but I want to stay on your terms—

Sen. Clinton: Well, but that—but that is important—

Mr. Russert: —because this was something that you wrote about as a real success for your husband. You said it was good on balance for New York and America in 2004, and now you're in Ohio and your words are much different, Senator. The record is very clear.

Sen. Clinton: Well, I—I—you don't have all the record because you can go back and look at what I've said consistently... ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 95-105).

After Clinton stressed the differences between her plans for NAFTA and Obama's for several paragraphs, Russert asked for clarification yet again: "But let me button this up. Absent the change that you're suggesting, you are willing to opt out of NAFTA in six months?" To which Clinton immediately replied, "I'm confident that as president, when I say we will opt out unless we renegotiate, we will be able to renegotiate" ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 110-111). In essence, Russert's behavior indicates someone who clearly did not trust the answers he was receiving, implying for the viewer that perhaps there was some reason for doubt (like a lack of sincerity, integrity, etc.). It also, in a basic form, demonstrated the sexism that often permeates political races involving women, in that women are often interrupted much more than their male rivals.

Russert continued his strategy of interrupting Clinton several other times during the debates, only rarely doing the same to Obama. And, as if taking a cue from his colleague, Brian Williams began doing the same thing later in this debate, as the following excerpt demonstrates:

Mr. Williams: And Senator, I need to reserve –

Sen. Clinton: Well, but I have -- I just have to add –

Mr. Williams: I'm sorry, Senator, I've got to –

Sen. Clinton: Now wait a minute, I have to add –

Mr. Williams: I've got to get us to a break because television doesn't stop.

Sen. Clinton: -- because the question -- the question was about invading -- invading -- Iraq.

Mr. Williams: Can you hold that thought until we come back from a break? We have limited commercial interruptions tonight, and we have to get to one of them now.

It should be noted that when the debate returned from break, Brian Williams never returned to Clinton for an answer, and instead, asked Obama a new question instead.

Russert continued to question Clinton on numerous topics, including her unwillingness to release her tax returns and in testing her knowledge about the identity of the newly elected President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, and in a manner that was largely uncommon of his fellow moderators during the primary debates. When the questioning turned to the economy, Russert asked a lengthy question, implicitly arguing against Clinton's previous campaign promises:

Senator Clinton, on the issue of jobs, I watched you the other day with your economic blueprint in Wisconsin saying, this is my plan; hold me accountable. And I've had a chance to read it very carefully. It does say that you pledge to create 5 million new jobs over 10 years. And I was reminded of your campaign in 2000 in Buffalo, my hometown, just three hours down Route 90, where you pledged 200,000 new jobs for upstate New York. There's been a net loss of 30,000 jobs. And when you were asked about your pledge, your commitment, you told The Buffalo News, 'I might have been a little exuberant.' Tonight will you say that the pledge of 5 million jobs might be a little exuberant? ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 121-122).

Clinton recovered from the seemingly hostile question effectively, using the opportunity to blame George Bush and his policies as an excuse for her miscalculation, but the tone of the question seemed to smack of bias, especially when comparing Russert's questions to Obama that were not nearly as overt in skepticism and malignancy. Regardless, the negative tone with which Russert spoke to Clinton, again, reaffirmed the skepticism that many voters already had in terms of Clinton's reputation. After all, if Clinton was a power-hungry woman who would stop at nothing to realize her political ambitions, then Russert was right to approach her with this level of hostility. And because of Russert's approach, Clinton was left with little to do but weather the

storm and recover as much as possible through her own use of rhetoric. In other words, instead of Clinton being able to provide counter examples to disprove this constraint and establish her warmth, she had to spend more time recovering from these examples of poor moderator behavior during the debates. As such, Clinton was never really able to recover from this particular constraint, and the perception that she was largely lacking warmth, integrity, and femininity continued.

Clinton's rhetoric and treatment by the moderators during the debate was a trial by fire that she, or any other candidate running for high elective office, had to go through. After all, political candidates, especially women, have to demonstrate that they are "tough enough" to assume the office they seek. Since Clinton was a woman running for the most masculine of elected offices in our country, it showed a sign of weakness when she argued against the unequal treatment she was shown in the debates (as if, as a woman, she would have required special help to establish equal footing among her male rivals), and her complaints diminished her standing among some of her audience members (as seen when audience members would "boo" when she dared to comment about such issues). At the same time, her abject lack of response to such sexism, and her unwillingness to overtly challenge the ideology that she was not caring, warm, nurturing, or feminine also cost her in terms of the perceptions of audience members. It is clear, from the number of references in her speech and debate transcripts that Clinton sought to address this particular constraint, but did so in a way that was at times contradictory, and thus, never seemed authentic. Compounding this constraint were the rhetorical skills of Obama, who rarely engaged in this aspect of the debate about Clinton's reputation, even when baited into doing so by the debate moderators. Indeed, while Obama would rarely harp on this specific constraint faced by Clinton, evidenced by his minimal comments on the subject in the previous discussion

of Clinton's reputation, his rhetorical abilities, and the strategies used by himself and members of his campaign proved, in and of themselves, to comprise another one of Clinton's major rhetorical constraints during her campaign.

Obama's Campaign Strategies as Constraints for Clinton's Rhetoric

Even before Clinton announced her candidacy, Barack Obama's campaign strategies posed a set of definable constraints for Clinton's rhetoric. On one hand, this was to be expected, as Obama was Clinton's chief rival for, and eventually the winner of, the Democratic Party's nomination for president. On the other hand, the nuanced ways in which Obama's campaign served as a rhetorical spoiler for Clinton's chances deserves specific scrutiny. Specifically, Obama's strategies provided Clinton with several logistical constraints during the campaign, complicated her promise of change versus Obama's (causing her to alter her rhetoric mid-stream), and resulted in a campaign that went far longer than any Democrat believed possible or wanted to occur.

Logistically, Obama's strategies complicated Clinton's rhetoric before she even made the announcement that she was running. Nagourney (2006) reported, late in 2006, "Senator Barack Obama's announcement that he might run for president is altering the early dynamics of the 2008 Democratic nominating contest. The move has created complications for Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton as she steps up her own preparations and is posing a threat to lesser-known Democrats trying to position themselves as alternatives to Mrs. Clinton..." (para. 1). Indeed, Clinton had sought to delay her official entry into the race until later in 2007, "and focus instead on notching accomplishments as a prominent member of the new Democratic majority in the Senate" (Healy & Nagourney, 2007, para. 15-16). Alas, because Obama, who was not well-known outside for Illinois for anything other than a stirring 2004 Democratic keynote address,

had announced his possible foray into the presidential race, Clinton had to adjust her plans accordingly.

Another logistical issue demanding a rhetorical response from Clinton was caused by the public perception regarding Obama's wins and Clinton's losses during the campaign. On the ground in Iowa, the first primary battleground, and in the aftermath of Obama's win here, the perception dominating news sources was that Clinton's campaign was floundering while Obama's was gaining steam. Several stories reported that Clinton was shaking up her campaign staff—firing top officials and replacing them with individuals who may have more luck combating Obama's tactics ("Clinton overhauls, but," 2007; Kornblut, 2007). In essence, Obama's success in Iowa dominated news stories and compelled Clinton to constantly regroup. In terms of advertising, Nagourney and Healy (2007) reported, "Mrs. Clinton spent much of the early part of [2007] working huge rallies in the state's major news media markets in the belief that the coverage would reverberate into the more sparsely populated areas. But that is not the way things work in Iowa" (para. 22). Indeed, Clinton's strategies in caucus states in general were rightly judged by news reporters as far behind those of Obama's, and reminded readers of Clinton's lack of personal connection with voters. Iowa governor Tom Vilsack was reported in *The Washington Post* as saying, "'a caucus is so labor-intensive...It's so relationship-oriented'" (Kornblut & Balz, 2007, para. 15). And in Iowa specifically, Clinton's experience as a campaigner and former First Lady served her little. Kornblut (2007) reminded us, "From the outset, Clinton faced an uphill fight in Iowa, a state in which her husband was never forced to develop an infrastructure in his two runs for the White House. But in this campaign, her rivals moved quickly to assemble teams of veteran operatives. Still, her initial strategy did not push special emphasis on the caucuses, treating them as part of a national campaign" (para. 13-14).

Thus, since caucuses tend to focus attention on the persuasive abilities of candidates on a personal, one-on-one level—a level which Obama seemed much more apt to handle effectively while Clinton floundered because of her negative reputation—Obama’s strategy of focusing attention on these contests proved to be a constant constraint for the Clinton campaign.

Indeed, the campaign and caucuses in Iowa proved the veracity of this element of the Obama constraint for Clinton in detail. In late 2007 Obama’s efforts in Iowa were resonating well among voters and Clinton’s were not. As such, one of Clinton’s deputy directors, Mike Henry, circulated a memo at that time suggesting that Clinton skip the caucuses in Iowa altogether; an idea that offended many Iowans, and caused Clinton’s campaign to publicly recommit to seeing Iowa through (“Clinton overhauls, but,” 2007; Kornblut, 2007). Clinton, thus, became mired in a no-win situation; her campaign knew they would likely not be competitive in the state, but they felt compelled to remain given the negative implications for Clinton’s future successes if Obama went into New Hampshire with a win in Iowa (Healy, 2007d; 2008a; Steinberg & Elder, 2008).

Clinton’s performance in Iowa, and the complications raised by her campaign’s decision to concentrate on primary states out of a belief that she would wrap up the nomination by Super Tuesday on February 5th and Obama’s almost total success with caucuses, was, in large part, a key ingredient of Clinton’s political demise. Lawrence (2008b) asked and answered this most obvious question in an article for the *USA Today*: “Why doesn’t Clinton win caucuses? Clinton and her allies point to the nature of a caucus. Blue-collar shift workers, they say, don’t have the time or flexibility to show up at a certain time and stay for a couple of hours. If you’re out of town, you’re out of luck. Ditto if you can’t get a babysitter. Political analysts say passion and organization are key to caucuses wins, and Obama has them in greater measure” (para. 2-4).

Analyses among news reporters, such as these examples represent, indicate not only the logistical struggles with the caucuses that plagued Clinton, but also the likability issues she faced, as analyzed in the previous section. Clinton was not widely perceived as likable, and clearly, likability was a key factor in winning caucuses.

Another logistical complication for Clinton created by Obama's campaign is a bit less definable, though palpable for much of the later primary season: the news medias' preference for Obama over Clinton. Steinberg and Elder (2008) argue, "...the polls only tell part of the story of why reporters and news organizations like Newsweek, the Washington Post and MSNBC, among others, led their viewers and readers to believe Mr. Obama was on the verge of an easy victory in New Hampshire. 'I think the press for a variety of reasons has strong favorites in each of these two races...they strongly favor Senator Obama'" (para. 5-6). This perception is given more weight considering the previously articulated analysis of Clinton's treatment by Tim Russert and Brian Williams. Obama was, at least perceptually favored over Clinton, and this specific constraint may have affected the decisions of voters. Duerst-Lahti (2006) wisely noted, "...what the press assumed, and the way it frames its coverage...has consequences for what readers think about, and to a lesser extent, how they think about it" (p. 12-13). Combine this sentiment with Braden's (1996) assertion that women "struggle to receive...legitimacy in the eyes of the media and, subsequently, the public," and the implications for Clinton's campaign become clear. As Obama was seemingly more 'popular' among reporters, so to could he have been deemed more popular among voters.

Obama's strategies also complicated Clinton's overall rhetorical message as the senator from Illinois grasped tightly to more inclusive pronouns to describe his initiatives and policies, a stark contrast to Clinton's language on the trail. Leibovich (2007) reported, "Mrs.

Clinton...speaks further from her audience than Mr. Obama, but also spends more time gripping, grinning, and posing afterward. Mrs. Clinton has a tendency to use the ‘when I’m president’ construction, as opposed to ‘if I’m elected.’ She prefers the pronouns ‘I’ and ‘me,’ whereas Mr. Obama is more prone to use ‘we’ and ‘us’...” (para. 16). In essence, when we apply the previous scholarship regarding gender roles and the conventional language forms used by men and women, it was as if Obama rather than Clinton was speaking as a woman, complicating Clinton’s desired perception that she was warm, feminine, and cooperative in her approach to politics (the constraint previously analyzed in section two of this chapter).

Similarly, Obama’s campaign rhetoric and strategies also plagued Clinton as the race went on past the initial contests. Both camps, as they picked up delegates, attempted to spin the outcomes of primaries in their favor. And as evident from news sources, at this stage of the election (the week after Super Tuesday), Obama was winning the perception race. “Clinton and Obama are ‘inching along’ on delegates, says Jean Jessburg, a former Iowa party official who directed this year’s Nevada caucuses, ‘but the perception is that [Obama] is sweeping the country’” (Lawrence, 2008c, para. 5). Adding fuel to the perceptual fire, this same article went on to note that Clinton had been outspent by Obama. Other news stories told a similar tale; Balz and Craig (2008) reported, “Obama’s winning streak, his large margins and the prospect of more victories next week put Clinton in a tenuous position, despite the close delegate competition” (para. 9). Lawrence (2008a) reported the race in a similar way in February, stating, “Illinois Senator Barack Obama swept the contests on record fundraising, heavy advertising and a parade of celebrity endorsements, wiping out double-digit polling leads long held by his famous rival, former first lady and New York Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton” (para. 2).

Taking advantage of stories like these in various national news sources after Super Tuesday, Obama's campaign strategist was reported in the *USA Today* stating, "Obama is 'well-organized' for other February contests, including Maryland and Virginia next week" (Lawrence, 2008a, para. 16). This same article went on to comment on the Clinton campaign response strategy at the time, noting "Clinton advisers took an even longer view, citing opportunities in Texas and Ohio (March 4), in Pennsylvania (April 22), and even at the national convention" (para. 16). Thus, perceptually, the message throughout the earlier contests was clear, despite the narrow gap between the two candidates—Obama was far ahead, and Clinton was scrambling to stay afloat.

Finally, one word, common to Obama's rhetoric, spelled out myriad problems for Clinton's rhetorical response during the primary: change. As the analysis in Chapter Four indicates, Clinton directed a large part of her rhetorical efforts toward convincing voters that George Bush's failed leadership was a central problem that she could rectify as an antidote—a change from the current direction our country was headed. But Barack Obama and his campaign advisors were obviously keen to Clinton's strategy and adopted the campaign theme of "Change" for their own purposes as a tool to defeat Clinton.

News reports indicating Obama's proficiency with using this central theme of change proliferated from the beginning of the campaign, stressing Obama's adeptness with defeating Clinton at, what was at the time, her own game. A *New York Times* report from late 2006 clarified this idea before either of the candidates had even launched their campaigns:

In Mr. Obama, Democrats have a prospective candidate who both underlines and compensates for the potential weaknesses that worry many Democrats about Mrs. Clinton. He is fervent opponent of the war in Iraq, and Democrats see him as an

exceedingly warm campaigner with a compelling personality and a striking ability to command a crowd. He has no known major political baggage...And Mr. Obama can even match Mrs. Clinton's arresting political storyline if he tries to become the nation's first black president as she seeks to become its first female president (Nagourney, 2006, para. 6-7).

Nagourney continued in the same article to quote Obama as he foreshadowed a central rhetorical theme of his campaign and a vital constraint of Clinton's rhetoric on the trail:

...one of his central messages is that he is something Mrs. Clinton is not: a late baby boomer...and a fresh face that rises above old partisan grudges. Mr. Obama has already provided some hints of how he would position himself against Mrs. Clinton, suggesting that he would link her to her husband's presidency and their role in the intense partisanship that marked much of the 1990s and that carried over into the Bush presidency...Asked whether he detected a void in the Democratic presidential field, Mr. Obama replied that he sensed a mood of 'Do we want to get beyond the slash-and-burn, highly ideological politics that bogged us down over the last several decades?' (Nagourney, 2006, para. 13-15).

Indeed, Obama continued this line of attack against Clinton throughout the presidential primary, and used the negative perception of Clinton's reputation previously analyzed to articulate the resonant, central ideal behind his candidacy: Change. For instance, during the first debate against just Clinton before the pivotal Ohio and Texas contests, Obama summed up this argument clearly: "I don't think the choice is between black and white or it's about gender or religion. I don't think it's about young or old. I think what is at stake right now is whether we are looking backwards or we are looking forwards. I think it is the past versus the future"

(“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 16). Here, Obama attempted (successfully) to establish his own paradigm for voters with which to view the campaign and the candidates themselves—a strategy that required a direct rhetorical response from Clinton if she wished to challenge Obama’s assertions and win the votes of those who viewed her as a Washington elite and thus, an inauthentic agent of change.

Obama’s campaign strategies added one final, significant constraint as Obama’s candidacy drew more and more support and Clinton’s waned; the need to end the race as early as possible and establish a solid candidate who could compete in November against Republican presidential nominee, John McCain. This aspect of the Obama constraint resonated widely in mass media news sources as a key issue requiring Clinton’s response. The campaign dragged on months longer than anticipated, and the Clinton campaign suffered more than Obama’s (in terms of key staffers being hired and fired, super delegates pledging more and more support to Obama and shifting allegiances from Clinton to Obama, and Clinton’s monetary support diminishing as the race went on) (Balz, et al., 2008; Kornblut & Shear, 2008; Weisman, 2008). Each time Clinton would score a major victory, Obama would win his own, or win enough of the popular support within various contests to keep the margin of victory close (“For Clinton, a lively,” 2008; “Super Tuesday voters,” 2008). Thus, the perceptual support Obama enjoyed made the delegate race seem much less close than it actually was. After Super Tuesday, “Democratic strategist Geoffrey Garin...called Obama ‘a speeding freight train’...” while he noted that Clinton “badly needed victories ‘to recharge her campaign financially, [and] to recharge her campaign emotionally’” (Lawrence, 2008a, para. 6). At the same time, David Damore, a political scientist at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas argued, ““The longer this goes on, the better it is for Obama...Every time he wins, people take him more seriously”” (Lawrence, 2008a, para. 18-

19). In essence, these stories perpetuated the belief that Obama had the momentum and Clinton did not, despite her ability to win primaries and convince super delegates to continue to support her nomination well past Super Tuesday.

As the analysis of major news stories about the campaign indicates, Obama's strategies served as a significant constraint within Clinton's rhetorical situation. Though both candidates initially used somewhat similar rhetorical mantras, Obama's performances were perceived as far more credible or authentic, probably due to the manner in which Clinton crafted her rhetoric to address the previously articulated constraints regarding her presentation of experience sufficient to lead and the negative perception of her reputation. As such, one would have expected Hillary Clinton to feature a discussion and refutation of the issues posed by Obama's strategies in her key speeches and debate performances. However, as the analysis indicates, Clinton's rhetoric was more often than not indirect and thus, ineffectual in bypassing this specific constraint.

Obama's Strategies as Constraint in Clinton's Speeches

In her key campaign speeches, Clinton was largely hesitant to acknowledge the constraints that Obama's campaign strategies caused during her quest for the presidency, only talking about such strains indirectly or by lumping Obama in, discursively, with her other opponents. After her third place finish in Iowa, Clinton seemed to be in damage control mode, if not outright denial, asserting, "we're going to take this enthusiasm and go right to New Hampshire tonight" (Clinton, 2008a, para. 1). She continued this rhetorical damage control, asserting, "I am as ready as I can be after having had this incredible experience here in Iowa" (para. 4). More directly attempting to diminish Obama's and Edward's victories over her in the caucuses, she added, "We have always planned to run a national campaign all the way through the early contests" (para. 6). Clinton then proceeded to explain, perhaps, why she did not do as

well as she would have liked, again pointing out key logistical issues: “There were a lot of people who couldn’t caucus tonight despite the very large turnout. There are a lot of Iowans who are in the military... There are a lot of people who work at night...” (para. 15-16). The obvious assertion missing is that, had all of these caucus goers been able to vote, or caucus, they would have voted, naturally, for Clinton. In considering some of the scholarship from Chapter One, this rhetorical response to losing in caucuses was unwise for Clinton. It smacked of blaming others for mistakes rather than taking responsibility, and seemed to remind voters of the spin common to ‘typical’ politicians—aspects of Clinton’s rhetoric which seem much more masculine rather than feminine in nature (Beck, 2001; Epstein, et al., 1998).

Clinton’s response to Obama’s assertion that he more than she represented change was varied. As reported in various newspapers, she attempted to adopt the same rhetorical strategy as she attempted to embody change in Iowa. Milbank (2007) recounted many of her attempts at sloganeering in Iowa, such as ‘Ready for Change, Ready to Lead,’ and ‘Working for Change, Working for You,’ but also noted that such slogans were among many different attempts to lure voters, including ‘Big Challenges, Real Solutions,’ ‘Time to Pick a President,’ ‘The Hillary I Know,’ ‘Every County Counts,’ and ‘I’ve Switched to Hillary’ (para. 4-5). Because of the mass of slogans, Milbank concluded, “these days, it sounds as if a mad, computerized sloganator has taken over [Clinton’s] campaign headquarters” (para. 4-5). Milbank also added, as many others recognized during the same point in the campaign, that “Obama has been cautious about slogan proliferation,” instead choosing to focus his rhetorical efforts on the singular theme of ‘change,’ with only a few alterations (para. 7). This was wise, especially considering the polling numbers that indicated the appeal of change. Leibovich (2007) reported that, at the time, a poll targeting the female voting bloc indicated they were motivated by Clinton’s candidacy, “but more driven

by a desire to bring about change—which would appear to mesh with the Obama message” (para. 21). Thus, because Obama targeted his rhetoric more specifically around change, and Clinton used this moniker in conjunction with many others, it seemed to perceptually ring more true for Obama.

Clinton’s strategy when Obama had targeted the theme of change was obvious—she had to develop her own rhetorical response to Obama’s mantra of change. When her attempts fell flat, she then changed her strategy to instead decry Obama’s claims of change with negative campaigning. Leibovich (2007) argued:

[Clinton] rarely names her chief political competitors for the Democratic presidential nomination, but their presence looms. ‘Some people think you can hope for change,’ she said at one recent event, in a jab at Senator Barack Obama of Illinois. ‘Some people think you can just demand it,’ she added, in a swipe at former Senator John Edwards of North Carolina. ‘I think you do it by working really, really hard,’ she said, before going on to catalog her résumé (para. 2-3).

And while Clinton’s strategy of co-opting the ‘change’ mantra did seem to resonate early on in national polls, the story was much different on the ground in the early contests. As Kornblut and Cohen (2007) reported, “Nationally, Clinton is viewed as a candidate of change, with support from 41 percent of Democrats seeking a new direction in a recent Post-ABC poll. But in Iowa, Obama dominates the ‘change’ vote, winning 43 percent of that group, compared with 25 percent for Edwards and 17 percent for Clinton” (para. 7).

And in reality, given Clinton’s lack of focused rhetoric early on in the campaign, it is no wonder why Clinton’s attempts to perpetuate herself as a change agent failed. Healy (2007d) argued, “Other times it was Hillary-as-change-agent; still other times it was, I’m a known

quantity, I'd be a steady hand on the ship of state" (para. 8). While Obama would talk one-on-one with voters, shaking hands and invigorating crowds at his events in Iowa, "Mrs. Clinton's events [were] meticulously planned and orderly, and even regal at times" (Leibovich, 2007, para. 15). Clinton's strength was never going to be, as articulated in the previous section of this chapter, her likability, nor her ability to argue that she was, indeed, an unknown X-factor, able to lead the country in a new direction never traversed. Indeed, her rhetorical strength was going to be in, ideally, relying on her experience and expertise against a lesser-experienced Obama. But Clinton persisted in trying to have her cake and eat it too, rhetorically—drawing on both narratives of established leadership and change agent, and thus, her strategy, caused by this specific constraint, fell flat. Page and Lawrence (2008) summed up this particular setback for Clinton's rhetoric in Iowa succinctly: "Iowans chose Obama's message of 'turning the page' to a new kind of politics over Clinton's assurances that she had the strongest experience" (para. 16).

When Clinton's attempt to co-opt the idea of change did fall flat on voters in Iowa, the Clinton campaign responded to this specific rhetorical complaint, according to news reports, by "stepping up their criticism of Obama and...[drawing] distinctions between [Clinton's] level of experience and electability and his" (Kornblut, 2007, para. 12). These same advisers would go on, later in the campaign, to argue, "'We're in the solutions business and [Obama's] in the promises business'" (Balz & Craig, 2008, para. 16).

Clinton's attempt to derail Obama's mantra of change seemed deeply flawed rhetorically, and his campaign seemed to understand this. Obama, after Super Tuesday, was quoted in *The Washington Post* as saying, "'Today, the change we seek swept through...At this moment, the cynics can no longer say our hope is false'" (Balz & Craig, 2008, para. 5). Among the cynical critics, was, of course, Hillary Clinton, and Obama's characterization was apt. By adopting the

rhetorical strategy she did, Clinton was attempting to counter ‘change’ by raising doubts in the mind of voters—for all intents and purposes, by killing the hope that we can change our country. When campaigning to win hearts and minds, this does not seem to ring as a promising strategy. In a statement that perhaps summed up the public outcry against such a rhetorical strategy embodied by Clinton’s struggle against Obama’s ‘change’ ideology, Filmmaker Michael Moore was featured in the *USA Today* endorsing Obama’s bid, and lambasting the negativity of Clinton’s campaign. He stated, “‘what’s going on is bigger than [Obama] at this point...and that’s a good thing for this country’” (Memmott & Page, 2008, para. 11-12). In essence, Clinton’s attempt to defeat the surge desiring change was simply seen as evidence that she was part of a general malaise discussed by historian Matthew Dallek. Dallek argued, “‘You would think that post-9/11, there would be this almost World War II idea of the federal government as functional and wise, protecting us with its focus on the greatest threats. But people still have that general anti-Washington feeling, and the sense that Washington still doesn’t work’” (in Lizza, 2007, para. 8).

Clinton, of course, still attempted to use the ‘change’ mantra to a degree, among many different strategies, but the Obama campaign was unwilling to drop this ideology that had carried it to so many victories during the primary. Nagourney (2008) demonstrated this tenacity among both campaigns clearly: “Hillary Rodham Clinton took the stage for one of her last rallies here Monday night in front of a battery of signs declaring, ‘Ready for Change.’ Mr. Obama stood at a lectern that read, ‘Change We Can Believe In’” (para. 9). The wording of these signs was significant, rhetorically, and sums up the inherent struggles between the two candidates’ use of the mantra of change. Obama’s use of change was perceived as authentic, while Clinton’s was not. Considering the previous sections of this chapter, the reasons why become clear. Clinton had

a special, extraordinary obligation, as a woman running for president, to establish her experience and qualifications. And when she did, even though she somewhat relied on her past feminine role as First Lady to do so, she established herself as a part of the Washington in-crowd. As such, Obama's claim of change was much more believable than Clinton's. Additionally, as demonstrated in section two of this chapter, Clinton was perceived as the much less likable of the two candidates—specifically, she was seen as too private, lacking openness, and lacking warmth. Obama on the other hand was so likable, so charismatic, that he inspired a 'movement.' As such, though electing a woman as president certainly would indicate that the country was 'ready for change,' electing Obama was perceived by some voters (as indicated previously in Chapter Three) as a more authentic route to accomplish 'change we can believe in.'

Another way in which Clinton indirectly responded to the constraints posed by Obama's strategies—specifically, the length of the campaign caused by Obama's success—was by asserting that the race was always believed to be one that must be hard-fought. Clinton, after the Iowa caucuses, asserted, "We have a long way to go but I am confident and optimistic, both about the campaign but maybe more importantly about our country. This country deserves everything we can give to it" (Clinton, 2008a, para. 14). She continued in the same speech, stating, "Thank you all so very much...for understanding that this great democracy of ours deserves to have all of our best efforts and I promise you, this campaign that I am running will certainly have mine and I ask for yours as well" (para. 20). After winning the New Hampshire primary, Clinton continued this same theme, stating, "We know that for the promise of America to be real, we are called upon to deliver on that promise. And if you join in this call to greatness, we will, together, answer. So tomorrow we're going to get up, roll up our sleeves and keep going" (Clinton, 2008b, para. 9). Clinton's responses here indicate the toughness and

determination she tried to establish in accentuating her experience and credibility. This rhetoric also defies the stereotypical weakness that some voters may associate with a female candidate, and thus, may have helped Clinton rally voters for as long as she did on the campaign trail. Still, by only indirectly addressing the constraints posed by Obama's strategies, she missed out on an opportunity to counteract the Obama 'movement' that was, at this time during the campaign, beginning to develop momentum.

A final way in which Clinton indirectly acknowledged the constraints posed by Obama's strategies in her campaign speeches was in posing rhetorical counter-attacks against Obama's penchant for speech-making versus Clinton's abilities to make changes possible through action. She interacted with her audience in Iowa before the caucuses, asking, "Who is ready and able to make the changes we need starting on day one in the White House?" (Clinton, 2007b, para. 19). After the crowd responded with a resounding 'You are,' Clinton continued: "Well, some people believe you make change by demanding it. Some people believe you make change by hoping for it. I believe you make change by working hard for it. That's what I've done all my life and that is what I will do for you" (para. 21). After Clinton failed to win the Iowa caucuses, though Clinton still attempted to perpetuate this claim, attempting to recapture Obama's momentum, by contending: "What is most important now is that as we go on with this contest that we must keep focused on the two big issues, that we answer correctly the question that each of us has posed: How will we win in November 2008 by nominating a candidate who will be able to go the distance and who will be the best president on day one? I am ready for that contest" (Clinton, 2008a, para. 5). Again, Clinton's rhetoric here reflected a candidate who was in denial. Though she was surely able to capitalize on her win in New Hampshire, she seemed after this win to rest on her laurels (rhetorically) by never again addressing the specific constraints posed by Obama's

campaign. This could be interpreted as a wise way to deal with the “Obamabots,” in that Clinton could have been enacting the masculine idea of ‘never letting your opponents see you sweat.’ However, in addressing the entirety of the rhetorical situation during the campaign, it becomes clear that this is not the best interpretation of events. In much the same way as the analysis in Chapters Three and Four indicated was almost a definable trend for Clinton, she seemed to be simply unaware or at least unwilling to acknowledge the realities of her rhetorical situation when she had complete control over the substance of her message. As such, Clinton’s key campaign speeches did not aid her in arresting the social movement-like momentum that Obama’s campaign came to represent.

Obama’s Strategies as Constraint in Clinton’s Debate Performances

In contrast to the indirect approach with which Clinton approached this constraint in her key speeches, Clinton used her debate performances to more directly express her displeasure with some of Obama’s tactics, making careful choices to highlight those tactics that she no doubt believed would most hurt his candidacy. At the very beginning of the Cleveland debate, the first in which the two debated only each other, Clinton condemned Obama’s use of negative campaigning and the alleged mindset behind it. She asserted, “And in the last several days, some of those differences in tactics and the choices that Senator Obama’s campaign has made regarding flyers and mailers and other information that has been put out about my health care plan and my position on NAFTA have been disturbing to me” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 5). She continued directly after this opening barrage, “it’s been unfortunate that Senator Obama has consistently said that I would force people to have health care whether they could afford it or not...my plan will cover everyone and it will be affordable. And on many occasions, independent experts have concluded that...So we should have a good

debate that uses accurate information, not false, misleading and discredited information...” (para. 7-8). And while Clinton was certainly, as any politicians would be, justified in responding to such allegations and tactics, responding to Obama’s tactics in this way arguably mitigated her attempts to establish warmth and likability. And as the analysis in Chapter Three indicates, Clinton was rarely perceived positively when going negative with her campaign discourse. As such, responding to the constraints posed by Obama’s strategies in this way, while it attempted to demonstrate that Obama was also engaged in negative campaigning, likely did more harm than good in terms of voter perception.

Later in the Cleveland debate, Clinton was once again forced to address Obama’s attacks on her Iraq vote. But when she was asked to respond, Clinton did her best to alter the premise of the argument—instead of defending her vote, she attacked Obama’s oratorical finesse and senate votes in much the same way she had during her speeches in Iowa:

And every time the question about qualifications and credentials for commander in chief are raised, Senator Obama rightly points to the speech he gave in 2002 [wherein Obama argued against going to war]. He’s to be commended for having given that speech. Many people gave speeches against the war then, and the fair comparison is he didn’t have responsibility, he didn’t have to vote; by 2004 he was saying that he basically agreed with the way George Bush was conducting the war/ And when he came to the Senate, he and I have voted exactly the same (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 134).

This was an apt strategy for Clinton, and one that she needed to do more often, since, as the analysis in Chapter Four indicates, Iraq was a key exigence during her campaign. However, because she failed to offer more rhetoric like this—discourse that not only turned the tables on the Iraq discussion but that also reminded voters that while Obama was the candidate of pretty

speeches she was the candidate of experience and action—the constraints posed by Obama’s strategies persisted until the end of the campaign in June.

Indeed, Obama made several strategic moves that complicated the clarity and force of Clinton’s rhetoric during the key primary debates. For example, during the Cleveland debate, Obama countered Clinton’s claims of experience and once again used her Iraq vote against her when he stated, “I think everybody, the day after that vote was taken, understood this was a vote potentially to go to war... The reason that this is important, again, is that Senator Clinton, I think, fairly, has claimed that she’s got the experience on day one. And part of the argument that I’m making is that, it is important to be right on day one” (“Transcript of Thursday’s,” 2008, para. 511-514). Obama also, during the Cleveland debate, made it a point to highlight the negative campaigning conducted by the Clinton campaign, causing a large part of this specific debate to be devoted to the constraints surrounding the campaign and less about the salient issues that both candidates championed. The Cleveland debate also offered Obama the opportunity to, once again, co-opt one of Clinton’s key rhetorical strategies of accentuating her experience. Obama argued, “Well, Senator Clinton I think equates experience with longevity in Washington. I don’t think the American people do and I don’t think that is you look at the judgments that we’ve made over the last several years that that’s the accurate measure... on the critical issues that actually matter I believe that my judgment has been sound and it has been judgment that I think has been superior to Senator Clinton’s as well as Senator McCain’s” (“The Democratic Debate in Cleveland,” 2008, para. 130-132). All of these ideas brought up in the debates by Obama served to counteract many of the tactics Clinton was using to establish her experience and warmth, demonstrating the scope of this particular constraint for Clinton’s rhetoric.

The analysis of news stories regarding this set of constraints indicates the force behind Obama's strategies. However, neither Clinton nor Obama dedicated a large amount of time attending to these constraints. For Obama, this was tactical, as his lack of much discussion about these issues implied to the voting public that he was satisfied to allow such strategies and arguments stand on their own merit. For Clinton, this was damning as it was clear that Obama's strategies compelled the perceptual momentum, no matter how many contests she won, to perpetually be in Obama's favor. She needed to respond directly to the constraints posed by Obama's strategies, but failed to do so sufficiently—either because of a lack of effective response or, more likely, because she was too busy rhetorically constructing her persona as an experienced leader or repairing her negative reputation to convince voters she was likeable and feminine. As the final section of this chapter indicates, Clinton may have had yet another constraint that distracted from her successful attention to Obama's strategies on the trail—her husband and campaign surrogate, former President Bill Clinton.

Bill Clinton as Constraint for Hillary Clinton's Campaign

Like many of Hillary Clinton's strategies, including Bill Clinton on the campaign trail had both positive and negative consequences. From the outset, Bill Clinton would seemingly have only added positively to the early energy that Hillary Clinton's campaign possessed. He was, after all, a popular president, despite the chaotic later years of his administration, and he was able to draw as large a crowd on the trail as his wife, ensuring that thousands would be able to hear Hillary's message. Additionally, the charismatic former president could have been useful in attracting grassroots support for Hillary, and could potentially have "[energized] the activists needed to win a caucus" (Kornblut & Balz, 2007, para. 13). Indeed, from the very beginning of his wife's campaign, Bill Clinton often worked behind the scenes, courting citizen as well as

super delegate votes, and providing his advice and expertise privately (Darman, 2007). However, Bill Clinton's presidency was steeped in conflict and controversy, to say the least, and thus, his inclusion on the campaign trail was a risk. Baker (2008) asserted, "Clinton's was a presidency often marked by turbulence, full of operatic twists and colorful characters. At times he was viewed as a transformative leader, at other times as a marginalized figure. His stumbles paved the way for Republicans to capture Congress for the first time in 40 years, yet he learned how to 'triangulate' to get back on top" (para. 11).

As other scholars who have studied Hillary Clinton's campaign have noted, including Bill in her campaign in any sort of feature role was not without negative consequences. First, such a move reminded voters of the key difference between Hillary Clinton and all other serious presidential aspirants who came before her: she was a woman campaigning to be what no other woman had ever been. Torrens (2009) argued that Bill Clinton's presence on the trail conjured costly perceptions: "it [was] Clinton's role as a *wife* that, for historical, cultural, and ideological reasons, prevented her success in the campaign...Hillary Clinton's campaign stood no chance of success because of the discursively gendered nature of the presidency and because of her prior choices regarding her position as *wife*" (p. 29). Schnoebelen, et al. (2009) agreed, and asserted that Hillary Clinton's tie to Bill Clinton was so palpable in the public, political sphere that it was impossible for Hillary to run on her own merits because of Bill Clinton's presence on the trail and the negativity that their past and his actions engendered among voters. Kenner Muir and Taylor (2009) concurred that Bill Clinton's influence on his wife's presidential campaign was inescapable and as such highly constraining; they asserted, "As individuals, each Clinton has an ability to adapt and respond to various political situations and be highly successful in garnering public support. However, for a married team, the political influences and challenges take on a

vastly different dimension given the intersections of marriage, gender, and politics” (p. 69-70). As such, given the myriad issues that could and did develop based on the inclusion of her husband in Clinton’s campaign strategies, Bill Clinton and his actions represented a unique constraint in Hillary Clinton’s rhetorical situation on the campaign trail.

Still, it arguably made sense to include Bill Clinton on the campaign trail because of Hillary’s strategy of including her days as First Lady among her years of experience. This, however, allowed Obama and other candidates to deny Hillary Clinton’s rhetoric as a change agent, something the former president even admitted on the trail. Kornblut and Balz (2007) argued, “[Hillary] Clinton has begun emphasizing the message of change, as well—a challenge, given her increasing reliance on her husband’s record in the White House in the 1990s. The former president did not shy away from looking backward during their joint appearance Tuesday, acknowledging that people might look at him and his wife and think, ‘they’re old, and they’re sort of yesterday’s news’” (para. 6). Thus, perceptions like this—fostered by Bill Clinton himself—damaged Hillary’s attempts to respond to the constraints posed by Obama’s change message, and explicitly prompted voters to look backward, rather than forward to a brighter political forecast.

Also, adding Bill Clinton helped to perceptually add endurance to Hillary’s candidacy, especially after the aforementioned possibility of Clinton pulling her team out of Iowa to focus on later primaries. On this topic, Healy (2007d) argued, “Mrs. Clinton and her husband are born competitors; throwing elections is not in their D.N.A. When Mrs. Clinton announced her candidacy last January, she said she was ‘in it to win it.’ There is no reason to think that she and her team have changed their minds...” (para. 17). However, as acknowledged previously, Bill Clinton could have seemingly added little in terms of strategy in Iowa as he never competed here

personally, and this fact served as a source of frustration for Clinton's campaign, as acknowledged in the *New York Times* by Nagourney and Healy (2007): "[In] Iowa, where Mrs. Clinton and her husband do not have the advantages of having run a primary campaign, as they have in New Hampshire, is a place that has appeared to frustrate the Clinton political operation from the day she arrived here. Bill Clinton never competed in Iowa caucuses; the state was effectively conceded to Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa in 1992, and Mr. Clinton was unopposed in 1996" (para. 7).

There were reports from the trail that indicated that Bill Clinton did not always enjoy being the supportive spouse while his wife took center stage (Nagourney & Healy, 2007). "At a time of growing tension in Mrs. Clinton's campaign [shortly before the Iowa caucuses], her aides described former President Bill Clinton as increasingly frustrated that his wife's campaign has not fought back even more forcefully against efforts by Mr. Obama and former senator John Edwards to raise questions about Mrs. Clinton's character. They said that Mr. Clinton has warned for weeks that they were taking a toll on his wife's candidacy" (Nagourney & Healy, 2007, para. 16). Indeed, when aides of Clinton were quoted in news sources, especially on a problem with the campaign, both Hillary and Bill Clinton's views were often expressed, implying publicly that the former president was a more dominant figure in planning the campaign than may have been the case. An excerpt from one *New York Times* article reflects this impression concisely: "Mrs. Clinton is trying to steel herself against pessimism, but both she and Mr. Clinton are feeling disappointment, advisers say" (Healy, 2008b, para. 17). Reports like these severely hampered Hillary Clinton's candidacy. On one hand, she was relegated, despite her own status as a U. S. Senator and successful campaigner, back to the role of partner on the trail, denying the individuality expected of men, and thus, successful presidential candidates

(Bower, 2003; Gilligan, 1993; Tolleson & Rinehart, 2001). It is difficult, after all, to establish yourself as an individualistic leader if you are constantly referred to as existing in a dyad. This becomes even more problematic when you are a woman attempting to embody the masculine individuation embodied by effective leaders generally and presidents specifically.

While Bill Clinton was responsible for some missteps early in the campaign, later in the campaign he would make outright gaffes that embarrassed his wife. After Hillary Clinton's loss in Iowa, Bill Clinton's presence became more prominent on the trail, working on the ground in Nevada and South Carolina particularly, attracting more and more media attention to his antics (Kornblut, 2009b). Bill Clinton attacked Obama before New Hampshire, calling his candidacy "the biggest fairy tale I've ever seen" (Dowd, 2008, para. 11). Similarly, Kornblut (2009b) noted that Bill Clinton was "widely chastised in the black community for discounting what Obama had accomplished...when [he] implied that Obama would win South Carolina for the same reason Jesse Jackson had, because of a large black electorate" (p. 71). Bill Clinton also was a constant reminder of the scandal that plagued his administration and thus, why some voters were hesitant to support Hillary. Kantor (2008b) reported, "[some voters remarked that they] admired Bill Clinton but would not vote for his wife because she stayed with her husband after the Monica Lewinsky scandal" (para. 18). Herein was another clear example of one double bind that plagues political women. If Hillary had left her husband after the Lewinsky scandal, she could have been perceived as a strong, independent woman, or as a woman who neglected the sacred bonds of matrimony. Either way, Clinton was trapped in a no-win situation. Bill Clinton, on the other hand, though he did suffer a decline in popularity during and immediately after the scandal, experienced no such double bind plaguing his political future and enjoyed, until the 2008 campaign, a resurgence of popularity after his terms as president ended.

Other voters expressed similar negative views, but instead of focusing their ire on scandal, they mentioned other negatives from Bill Clinton's administration that served as constraints to Hillary Clinton's campaign. An editorial in the *St. Petersburg Times* summed up this perception among voters clearly: "...Now Clinton's challenge is to inspire voters while defining her own vision for change...and having Bill Clinton and his old allies at her side makes that more difficult. For all the goodwill the former president has among many Democrats, his frustration and desperate attacks against Obama in New Hampshire recall the uglier, meaner side of the Clintons that this country does not need to revisit" (in "Did 'near-tear'," 2008, para. 5).

Indeed, Bill Clinton's presence on the campaign trail created a constraint that no other previous candidate, Democrat or otherwise, had ever had to face: the prospect of Hillary Clinton creating her own identity as a presidential contender while also having to deal with the legacy created by a spouse who had previously been the president. To demonstrate this concept, Baker (2008) wrote in *The Washington Post*, "...It seems more than a little bit about [Bill Clinton], too. As Hillary Rodham Clinton and Barrack Obama clash on multiple political fronts heading into Super Tuesday, William Jefferson Clinton's record as president has emerged as a key battleground. How Democrats define his legacy could determine which presidential candidate they choose: Hillary Clinton, to extend it, or Obama, to make a clean break from it" (para. 3). The Clinton campaign staff knew that this was a risky endeavor; Bill Clinton would obviously want to defend his record and his successes, but in doing so would overshadow Hillary as a candidate and draw attention away from her own unique initiatives and plans. Baker (2008) continued, asserting that the campaign staff understood "that campaigns are about the future, not the past, and that Hillary Clinton needs to maintain her own identity. At the same time, they

anticipate that Republicans will take on the former president with full force should she win the nomination” (para. 22).

Just as a number of scholars mentioned at the beginning of this section have already concluded was somewhat due to Bill’s presence on the trail, when Hillary Clinton’s campaign began to falter, political pundits began to openly connect her failures with his actions. Dowd (2008) provided evidence of Bill Clinton’s detriment to his wife’s campaign hopes:

Bill Clinton, campaigning in Henniker on Monday, also played the poor-little-woman card in a less-than-flattering way. ‘I can’t make her younger, taller or change her gender,’ he said. He was so low-energy at events that it sometimes seemed he was distancing himself from her. Now that she is done with New Hampshire, she may distance herself from him, realizing that seeing Bill so often reminds voters that they don’t want to go back to that whole megillah again (para. 20).

Indeed, Bill Clinton’s presence on the trail was conceptualized by many, as retold through news sources, as “Clinton fatigue.” Leibovich (2008) wrote, “...the anger felt by the Clintons and that directed at them goes to what many see as deep fractures and unresolved tensions in the Democratic Party. ‘There is a lot of Clinton fatigue in the party and in the country today, and many people are reacting to that,’ said Tom Daschle, a former Democratic leader in the Senate, who is supporting Mr. Obama” (para. 12-13).

From this examination of major news stories and scholarship, Bill Clinton as a force on the campaign trail was arguably a potent constraint for Hillary Clinton’s rhetoric; however, there is little to no mention of Bill in any of Hillary’s key campaign speeches. Beyond thanking Bill, along with her mother, Chelsea Clinton, and any number of other personal friends, Bill Clinton’s name is used nowhere in any of her speeches analyzed in this study. Indeed, Clinton never

brought up her husband when she had complete control over her rhetoric. Why this was the case is anyone's guess. Her campaign speeches, planned out and refined for eloquence and clarity in advance, were certainly sites wherein she could have discussed the constraints posed by her husband's behavior on her own terms and clarified the issue for voters. On the other hand, if she had handled it poorly, Clinton's campaign speeches addressing her 'Bubba issues' on the trail certainly could have backfired or perpetuated the perception that she was shackled, inescapably, to her husband. Indeed, the following analysis of Clinton's debate performances wherein she addressed this constraint indicates a lack of comfort with this issue that could have explained the lack of response in her own speeches on the trail.

Bill Clinton as Constraint in Hillary Clinton's Debate Performances

Clinton made implicit statements about her husband during a few of her key debate performances, but rarely named her husband specifically when she did so. In her first debate against only Obama in Cleveland, Clinton stated, responding to a question about tax cuts, "But Wolf, it's really just important to underscore here that we will go back to the tax rates we had before George Bush became president. And my memory is, people did really well during that time period... (APPLAUSE)...And they will keep doing really well" ("Transcript of Thursday's," 2008, para. 203-205). Clinton adopted a similar strategy when she discussed the economy in her last debate against Obama in late April; Clinton claimed, "I wouldn't raise [capital gains tax rates] above the 20 percent if I raised it at all. I would not raise it above what it was during the Clinton administration" ("Democratic Debate in Philadelphia," 2008, para. 260). Later in this debate, she discussed Social Security and made a similar comment: "I am totally committed to making sure Social Security is solvent. If we had stayed on the path we were on at the end of my husband's administration, we sure would be in a lot better position because we had

a plan to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund...” (para. 279). In all of these excerpts, Clinton’s strategy was clear: she was hearkening back to the days of her husband’s administration as a repudiation of the George W. Bush era in the White House. As the analysis in Chapter Four demonstrated, Clinton regularly featured Bush as a foil during the campaign, and as these specific excerpts make clear, her argument was, albeit indirectly, that she would return the country to the more palatable state of the Clinton era. Thus, while not using her husband directly in her discourse, Clinton was framing her policies to mirror those of her husband’s, and, at the same time, further entrenched her connection to her husband as a constraint during the campaign.

And while Clinton herself rarely addressed any of the problems that resulted when she included her husband in her campaign, she was unable to avoid this specific constraint in her debate performances because of both the moderators and her opponents. During the first South Carolina debate, wherein Clinton, Obama, and Edwards took part, Obama forced Hillary to address Bill Clinton’s role on the campaign trail. Obama argued, “The irony is that you provided much more fulsome praise of Ronald Reagan in a book by Tom Brokaw that’s being published right now, as did—as did Bill Clinton in the past” (“The Democratic Debate in South,” 2008, para. 135). Shortly after this line, Obama and Clinton had a telling exchange reflecting Hillary’s frustration with her ‘Bubba issues’ during the campaign:

Clinton:... You talked about Ronald Reagan being a transformative political leader. I did not mention his name.

Obama: Your husband did.

Clinton: Well, I’m here. He’s not. And...

Obama: Ok. Well, I can’t tell who I’m running against sometimes.

(APPLAUSE)

Clinton: Well, you know, I think we both have very passionate and committed spouses who stand up for us. And I'm proud of that (para. 149-154).

Later in this same debate, we saw a glimpse of another common theme regarding Bill Clinton's presence on the trail—specifically, the news media's predilection for making Bill Clinton a subject regardless of the topic discussed. During this debate, reporter Susan Malveaux and Hillary Clinton shared an exchange that exemplified this trend cogently:

Malveaux: To Senator Clinton. In New Hampshire, you said you found your own voice, but increasingly there are people who believe that it's your husband's voice that has become too loud. Congressman Clyburn earlier said today, 'I think he can afford to tone it down.' Is there a risk that he is overshadowing your message and your voice?

Clinton: Well. I think that he is very much advocating on my behalf, and I appreciate that. He is a tremendous asset. And he feels very strongly about this country and what's at stake and what our future should be. I believe that this campaign is not about our spouses. It is about us. It is about each of us individually. Michelle and Elizabeth are strong and staunch advocates for their husbands, and I respect that ("The Democratic Debate in South," 2008, para. 589-592).

As this exchange indicates, Clinton understood that her husband's comments and actions on the trail had hindered her efforts. But her options, because she had included him in her campaign, and had developed aspects of her campaign platform heavily influenced by his presidency, were limited. This specific exchange, and Bill Clinton's actions on the trail in general, clarifies Hillary's double bind as a presidential candidate who was also a wife: she had to defend her husband because of their relationship as spouses, even though some may have preferred that she

had chastised him for his interference and misstatements. On the other hand, while some may have been satisfied by such an aggressive posture toward her husband on Clinton's part, others who believe (as Tammy Wynette once advocated) a wife should 'stand by her man' would have seen this behavior as unfeminine and probably un-presidential. As such, and because Hillary's image as unfeminine was already a considerable issue during the campaign, her rhetorical responses to this specific constraint had to be tailored in such a way to control the damage while remaining properly feminine.

In her first debate against only Obama in Los Angeles just before Super Tuesday, Bill Clinton's time as president was brought up by moderator Wolf Blitzer, but this time in a question for Obama: "Senator Obama...a lot of Democrats remember the eight years of the Clinton administration, a period of relative peace and prosperity, and they remember it fondly. Are they right? Should they be remembering those eight years with pleasure?" ("Transcript of Thursday's," 2008, para. 356-357). Obama's response was interesting and very strategic. Obama clearly did not want to anger Democratic voters who did look on Bill Clinton's administration fondly, but he also needed to progress his own interests in defeating Hillary Clinton. Thus, Obama responded, "Well, I think there's no doubt that there were good things that happened during those eight years of the Clinton administration. I think that's undeniable. Look we're all Democrats...So I don't want to diminish some of the accomplishments that occurred during those eight years, And I absolutely agree with Senator Clinton , that ultimately each of us have to be judged on our own merits" (para. 358-361). Obama's response compelled Hillary Clinton, when she had the chance to respond, to somewhat counter one of the chief ways she was establishing her own experience and abilities—she had to distance herself from her husband's administration. She conceded, "We start from the same place. Nobody has an advantage no

matter who you are or where you came from. You have to raise the money. You have to make the case for yourself. And I want to be judged on my own merits. I don't want to be advantaged or disadvantages. I'm very proud of my husband's administration" (para. 384-385). Clinton then tried to recover, adding humorously, "And you know, it did take a Clinton to clean up after the first Bush and I think it might take another one to clean up after the second Bush" (para. 388). Clinton tried, in this instance, to make the best of a bad situation. However, by distancing herself from Bill Clinton and his administration, as Obama likely hoped she would have done, she also distanced herself from a prime source of her experience and qualifications for the presidency. As section one of this chapter demonstrates, Clinton utilized her years as First Lady to give herself a unique set of desirable qualifications that no other candidate possessed. She spoke of these qualities and activities often in both her speeches and debate performances. However, by the end of the campaign, she was forced to abdicate them.

Later in this same debate, Hillary's Clinton's frustration with this issue once again bubbled to the surface after her husband was brought up by moderator Jeanne Cummings. The exchange is illuminating:

Cummings: Well, since we've dealt with the kids, let's deal with the spouses for a second. Senator Clinton...

Clinton: He has a spouse, too.

(LAUGHTER)

Obama: Thankfully Michelle is not on stage. I'm sure she could tell some stories, as well.

Cummings: Senator Clinton, your husband has set off several firestorms in the last few weeks in early primary states with the way he has criticized Senator Obama. Greg Craig, who was one of your husband's top lawyers [claimed if the] campaign can't control the

former president now, what will it be like when you're in the White House?

(LAUGHTER)

Clinton: Well, one thing I think is fair to say, both Barack and I have very passionate spouses...

Obama: We do, no doubt.

Clinton: ...who promote and defend us at every turn. You know, but the fact is that I'm running for president, and this is my campaign.

(APPLAUSE)

Clinton: And I have made it very clear that I want the campaign to stay focused on the issues that I'm concerned about, the kind of future that I want for our country, the work that I have done for all these years. And that is what the campaign is about. And of course, I'm thrilled to have my husband and my daughter, who is here tonight, you know, representing me and traveling the country...

(APPLAUSE)

Clinton: ...speaking with people, but at the end of the day, it's my name that is on the ballot, and it will be my responsibility as president and commander in chief, after consulting broadly with a lot of people who have something to contribute to difficult decisions, I will have to make the call. And I am fully prepared to do that ("Transcript of Thursday's," 2008, para. 538-554).

During the Los Angeles debate, Clinton did well to redirect the issues away from her husband and the problems he had caused during her campaign and to her experience and the advantages of having a Clinton in the White House. But at such a crucial time during the campaign—less than a week before Super Tuesday—it seemed as if Bill Clinton was a key aspect of the

campaign that people cared about. Thus, though Clinton had sparks of well-crafted discourse to address this constraint, the very fact that it was a key issue during a pivotal part of the campaign in and of itself was a constraint. Moreover, it was a constraint that Clinton, though at times joking with the moderators while she addressed this issue, clearly was uncomfortable with this topic of debate.

The trend of incorporating Bill Clinton into the debate subject matter continued throughout much of the campaign. During the Cleveland debate, Bill Clinton was brought up, this time by Obama, but in a more substantive way: to discredit Hillary Clinton's policy initiatives. When debating universal health care, Obama argued, "Every expert has said that anybody who wants health care under my plan will be able to obtain it. President Clinton's own secretary of Labor has said that my plan does more to reduce costs and as a consequence makes sure that the people who need health care right now all across Ohio, all across Texas, Rhode Island, Vermont, all across America, will be able to obtain it" ("The Democratic Debate in Cleveland," 2008, para. 33). Thus, despite Hillary Clinton's assurances that her campaign wasn't about Bill, it clearly was. In considering the previous pages articulating the number of news sources about Bill Clinton, the number of times his activities were condemned by Hillary Clinton's opponents, and the number of times the former president came up during the debates, Bill Clinton and his role in his wife's campaign was one of the more consistent and troubling constraints plaguing Hillary Clinton's rhetorical situation.

In her assessment of Clinton's campaign and its future implications for women seeking the presidency, Kornblut (2009b) argued the biggest problem for women running for the presidency is their husbands. She contended, "That was certainly the case for Hillary Clinton, who from the outset must have known that having a former two-term president for a husband

was bound to bring extra scrutiny” (para. 11-12). Scrutiny certainly did result from Bill Clinton’s time on his wife’s campaign, but more devastating were the rhetorical consequences. Bill Clinton embarrassed his wife, distracted voters, caused Hillary to distance herself from one of her prime sources of experience or caused the public to associate her as a wife rather than as an independent woman candidate, and perhaps more demeaning, forced her to, once again, clean up after a series of messes that he had caused. The reality was that she was, indeed, shackled to her past—a past that included not only a personal life that was difficult for most to understand but ventures into politics on a level that few of her predecessors had attempted. And, unfortunately, several of these ventures were not successful such as health care. Bill Clinton’s presence on the trail dominated national news and once again placed Hillary in her husband’s shadow. Bill reminded voters that Hillary was a woman running for the presidency, and of the turbulence experienced during the Clinton era (i.e. Kenneth Starr, Monica Lewinsky, Travelgate, Whitewatergate, etc.). Most strikingly his presence reminded voters of the past—a past that not all Democrats cherished—and distracted from the potential his wife’s candidacy could have offered. All of these factors negated the message of freshness and genuine concern for the American people that the Obama campaign was able to generate. Thus, when in contrast, Bill Clinton as a constraint for Hillary’s rhetoric severely damaged her viability as a candidate for president.

Chapter Summary

As is evident from the number of news reports and the rhetorical strategies allotted to the difficulties and challenges Clinton faced in her quest for the Democratic nomination in 2008, her rhetoric was highly constrained in tangible ways. In identifying connections among her responses to these constraints, it is clear that Clinton adopted several similar strategies.

First, Clinton often ignored the constraints she faced in her key speech opportunities. On one hand, this was understandable; few candidates, especially female candidates, would spend a significant amount of their time to directly convince their audience that they were likable or feminine enough to not challenge gender conventions while, at the same time, masculine enough for politics. Few candidates would also directly acknowledge how far behind they were perceptually because of the strategies enacted by their chief rival as such a move would instantly signal weakness. Clinton was similarly unable to acknowledge the problems created by her husband's involvement in the campaign because such a move would have complicated her presentation of femininity, or possibly cut her off from a chief source of political muscle while trying to raise money and secure voters who remembered Bill fondly. As such, Clinton relegated the constraints she faced to the background of her discourse though, all the while, because of the news stories surrounding her candidacy, these issues seemed salient for voters and pundits alike.

Second, because Clinton rarely attacked the validity or force of these constraints during her campaign speeches, despite the prevalence of these issues during the race, they became frequent topics during the debate performances, making it difficult for Clinton to respond to these issues cogently. The adversarial arena of political debates can, hypothetically, be a solid venue for establishing experience and a readiness to lead, but it is not a wise place to establish likability, warmth, and a lack of divisiveness as a candidate (as was Clinton's experience in 2008). Additionally, the debates were not the best place in which to challenge Obama's strategies or rhetorical force given the potential—realized, in Clinton's case—for the rhetoric to devolve into negative campaign attacks (a move that, as Chapter Three indicates, isolated Clinton from her audience). The debates also proved a costly location for addressing Bill Clinton's involvement in her campaign, since it forced Clinton into the double bind of both distancing

herself from her husband (a key source of establishing her experience) while she was not fully able to mitigate his bad behavior because such a move could have been perceived as unfeminine. Thus, Clinton's debate performances, because of her utter lack of control over her opponents or the moderators involved, added weight to the constraints she faced in her rhetorical situation and, as such, did not allow Clinton to form a fitting response that would allow her to bypass their effect on her candidacy.

Third, the one constraint Clinton seemed determined to turn in her favor during the campaign, the establishment of her experience as sufficient evidence of her leadership abilities, was handled effectively in her speeches but was largely diminished in her debate performances. As the myriad references in the first section of this chapter indicate, Clinton spent a large amount of her rhetorical efforts on establishing herself as able to lead. This was wise, to an extent, as much of the scholarship dedicated to women in politics has indicated the need for women to prove themselves as effective leaders, often more so than their male adversaries. However, Clinton seemed blind to the other constraints she faced in focusing on this specific issue, and thus, failed to balance her rhetoric to satisfy all of the constraints she faced. And indeed, when aspects of her experience began to deteriorate, especially during the debates later in the campaign (i.e. the experience she derived as First Lady), her rhetoric fell flat in allowing her to bypass, or handle at all, the constraints she faced.

In sum, the constraints Clinton faced in her rhetorical situation as presidential candidate overshadowed her abilities to draw positive attention to her campaign, and thus, hindered her abilities to successfully address the exigencies and persuade her audience. While Clinton was obviously successful to an extent—in capturing millions of votes and convincing many super delegates that she would have been the best candidate for the nomination—her rhetoric failed to

focus on the central problems she faced on the trail. Whether this was due to a lack of awareness or simply ignoring the constraints that persisted during the campaign, it is clear that Clinton failed to provide a fitting response given the nature of her rhetorical situation.

Now that each of the three elements of Clinton's rhetorical situation during her bid for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2008 have been described and critiqued, the conclusions and implications of this study will be presented in Chapter Six. The next chapter will also, based on the findings of this study, present the limitations of this investigation as well as avenues for future research for scholars interested in Hillary Clinton specifically, and the intersection of gender and politics generally.

Chapter Six: Critical Conclusions

In her assessment of rhetoric in general, Campbell (1972) noted, “conflict is a frequent and perhaps desirable outcome of persuasive discourse. Good rhetoric must stir up public discussion and controversy; it must speak to basic human conflicts if it is to fulfill its function as rhetoric” (p. 10). Taking this cue from one of the most lauded female rhetoricians in our field, I am compelled to agree, and add that if one goal of Clinton’s rhetoric during her campaign for president was to bring controversy and conflict to light in American culture, her campaign succeeded. Specifically, Clinton’s candidacy served as a distinct litmus test for understanding the highly constrained situation women must face when seeking high elective office. At the beginning of this study, I argued that Clinton’s gender played a central role in the construction of her campaign rhetoric, and indeed, the analysis has demonstrated that even when Clinton most wanted to be treated only as a viable candidate for president, her gender constrained her rhetoric. As such, this study of Clinton’s campaign rhetoric, utilizing the lens of Bitzer’s rhetorical situation, helps scholars to understand the tangible double binds facing women in politics, and the gendered expectations that form the foundation of these double binds. In short, this study reminds all of that while our society has made many strides toward gender equality in the public, political sphere, we have a long way to go before such equality can truly be realized.

The review of literature in the first chapter of this study was used to paint an initial picture of the rhetorical situation for any woman seeking political or leadership success. This literature also provided several questions about what one could expect when applying these findings to Clinton’s campaign. First, in addressing how Clinton could both acknowledge while also bypass the double binds experienced by political women because of their gender, it is clear that Clinton was just as trapped by her gender as any other woman would be, denoting the

powerful grasp that gender conventions have on our culture. Second, when posed with the question of how Clinton would acknowledge and combat the gendered trait expectations held by voters, it is now clear that Clinton used her rhetoric in both her speeches and debate performances to stress her possession of both male and female traits, though she stressed male traits much more than female traits in an effort to position herself as viable against a large field of male candidates. Third, in answering the question of how Clinton would address traditionally masculine and feminine issues, the analysis demonstrates that while Clinton did attempt to stress both masculine and feminine issues (especially in terms of her chosen exigencies in her campaign rhetoric), the rhetorical situation compelled Clinton to address more male than female issues, causing Clinton's candidacy considerable harm because of her previous activities with both Iraq and health care reform. Fourth, in addressing the central question of how Clinton could convince voters that she, as a woman, could assume the masculine position of president, the analysis demonstrates that Clinton largely ignored her gender on the trail, instead choosing to position herself as just another candidate for president, with many far-reaching implications. Fifth, in answering the question regarding the role media played on the campaign trail, it is clear now that media sources hindered her candidacy by consistently creating a rhetorical situation tying Clinton to negative aspects of the campaign trail (her ties to her husband Bill Clinton and his negative campaign attacks, her Bosnia gaffe and how this diminished her honesty and sincerity—two key traits women are supposed to embody, her failures with health care and how divisive she had been on this issue—another key problem for women who hope to achieve political success, etc.) and also embodying many of the sexist elements demonstrated by past studies of media coverage of women politicians (focusing on physical appearance and attire to Clinton's detriment, asking Clinton questions not asked of her male rivals, etc.). Finally, when

addressing the manner in which Clinton's rhetoric served to position herself as a leader, while she did employ several positive aspects of both male and female leadership, she also embodied many of the negative aspects of leadership ascribed to men.

The previous paragraph presents several quick answers to the questions posed in Chapter One. As such, in order to clarify the conclusions drawn and in order to foster salient implications regarding this study, the following pages take a closer look at each question and provide fuller justification for the answers provided. After the questions are explored and answered, the implications as well as the suggestions for future research and limitations of this study are presented.

Clinton's Inescapable Double Binds

The concept of the double bind has been applied to women in politics for nearly three decades now, and it serves as an apt metaphor for Clinton's rhetorical situation during the Democratic primary in 2008. Clinton's gender required on one hand that she embody masculine traits as she sought the most masculine of elective offices in the United States (and perhaps the world), yet her gender, on the other hand, also required that she temper her appeals to masculine traits, issues, and leadership styles in order to not defy societal conventions regarding appropriate femininity. Clinton's dominant strategy in addressing the double binds experienced by political women was, largely, to ignore that they applied to her. Clinton rarely acknowledged the historical nature of her candidacy, instead choosing to run as any male candidate for president would—stressing her past experiences and qualifications to lead as evidence that she should win the nomination. This proved costly to Clinton, in the end, because such a rhetorical strategy ignored the reality of her rhetorical situation.

In terms of her audience, Clinton could have used the double binds facing her as a woman to bolster her ethos among women voters, a voting bloc she assumed would come to her assistance but, in the end, was deeply divided between supporting Clinton and supporting Obama. As the analysis in Chapter Three indicates, Clinton's voting base quickly eroded as her opponents cast themselves as clear alternatives to the former First Lady and perceptual Washington insider. The theme of the 2008 election was clearly change, and in trying to position herself as a capable candidate in general, rather than a capable female candidate specifically, Clinton lost the opportunity to position herself as a key ingredient to changing American politics. Anita Dunn, a senior Obama campaign staff member, clarified this strategic flaw succinctly: "They spent 2007 basically trying to credential [Clinton] as qualified when she already was...For Hillary, the opportunity in that race was to be a change agent who had the experience but could also bring change. And instead they wanted to run her as Margaret Thatcher" (in Kornblut, 2009b, p. 40-41).

But could Clinton have run her campaign differently? In the comforting light of hindsight, an obvious answer could be "yes." Clinton could have more cogently argued that as a woman she represented change, much as Obama did as an African-American. I argue though, given the analysis presented in this study, and the conclusions drawn by several other studies regarding Clinton's candidacy, it would have been incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for Clinton not to stress her leadership abilities more than her gender (see Carlin & Winfrey, 2009; Kenner Muir & Taylor, 2009; Kunin, 2008; Schnoebelen, et al., 2009). Given what we know about the predominance of gender stereotypes held by American voters, Clinton had to convince her audience that she could win as the best qualified candidate rather than the candidate who could bring societal change that voters may not have been ready for. In essence, Obama could do

what Clinton could not; as an African-American *male*, Obama could more easily embody societal change because he was not shackled by gender conventions in political contexts.

Indeed, Obama seemed able to utilize feminine strategies in his run for the White House much more so than Clinton. Kornblut (2009b) summed up this idea clearly:

For Obama...As the 2008 campaign progressed, his feminine side seemed to grow. Far from proving himself on the shooting range or in military gear, he appeared on daytime talk shows and used words like *inclusive* and *sensitivity* and *empathy*. He encouraged his campaign to foster ‘consensus,’ a tone reflected by his grassroots Internet operation. He deferred to his wife, whom he described as the ‘tougher’ one. Obama was at ease discussing breast cancer and relating to his two young girls, whom he brought up on stage with surprising regularity. He liked to *listen*, and to rest a hand on the shoulder of an autograph seeker on the rope line—warmly, not in the backslapping style of previous male candidates (p. 43-44).

Ironically, this summary of Obama’s campaign style was reminiscent of the tactics Bill Clinton used when he ran for president (he was warm, congenial, and “felt our pain,” etc.). Still, Kornblut’s analysis helps to summarize one of the key ideas reflected in this study: Obama was able to enjoy gender latitude in running for president because he was a man; Hillary Clinton, conversely, enjoyed no such latitude, either because of societal conventions or self-imposed rules based on the perception of gender expectations. This awareness caused former Clinton administration spokesperson, Dee Dee Myers to quip, “‘I joked during the campaign that if Bill Clinton was the first black president, Obama could be the first female president...[Obama] had so much more latitude to act like a girl than Hillary. Because he didn’t have to prove himself. He didn’t have all that baggage’” (in Kornblut, 2009b, p. 46). What Myers does not add but clearly

implied is that Hillary Clinton, as a woman running for president, did have to live up to, or at least address, the gendered expectations of voters. Herein lied the double bind for Clinton in terms of her audience.

Clinton's double binds also plagued her campaign in terms of the exigencies within her rhetorical situation. First, in her choice of rhetorical exigencies to feature as most relevant, Iraq and health care, Clinton was backed into a gendered corner from which she could not escape. At the start of the campaign, the Iraq war was the dominant issue, and she seized on the opportunity to demonstrate her leadership abilities on a masculine issue. However, because of her previous vote to authorize the war, Clinton's attempt to demonstrate masculine leadership was flipped by Obama's strategies in order to demonstrate that Clinton's leadership decisions were flawed from the beginning. She could not escape the perceptual failure of her initial vote to authorize the war, yet she had to keep addressing the war (and other Bush administration failures) because it was dominant in the minds of voters and she had to prove her aptitude with masculine issues. Similarly, Clinton chose universal health care as a key exigence in order to demonstrate not only a level of policy expertise (as she was very familiar with the issue), but also to demonstrate the feminine qualities of wishing to care for others and being nurturing. However, because her experience with health care reform was drawn largely from her time as First Lady and her work with Bill Clinton, it again placed her on precarious gendered footing. Her previous initiatives failed in 1994, harming the perception that she could lead successfully, but also, in a more damaging way, this reminded voters of the past failures of her husband's administration and when, quite frankly, Hillary Clinton was not very popular. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter One, several studies that analyzed perceptions of Hillary Clinton during her husband's first term have indicated that during health care reform in Bill Clinton's first administration, Hillary was viewed

as incredibly unfeminine and unlikable (Campbell, 1998; Corrigan, 2000; Dubriwny, 2005; Gardetto, 1992; Kelly, 2001). As such, when Hillary Clinton chose to make these two exigencies paramount during her campaign, she inadvertently created a rhetorical no-win situation from which she could not escape the double binds plaguing her candidacy.

Finally, in terms of the constraints Clinton faced in her rhetorical situation on the trail, the double binds were similarly real and damaging. Clinton's reputation as unlikable and lacking warmth and openness crippled her ability to succeed. This was not simply because she was running against Obama who was seen as incredibly warm, genuine, and authentic (though that certainly was a critical factor); rather, it was because Clinton's perceived personality, as demonstrated through media sources and her own rhetoric, defied traditional notions of femininity, 'True Womanhood,' or 'Republican Motherhood.' But Clinton, as a woman running for president, had to demonstrate these abilities. Clinton's rhetoric embodied the idea that she had to run as a man, possessing male characteristics, in order to be successful. In demonstrating her toughness, strength, and the ability to lead as any man could, Clinton was, at the same time, bolstering the claims that she was unfeminine, making her appear too different, too controversial, or possibly too revolutionary as a candidate. And while she was able to connect with millions of voters who perceived her as warm and authentic, or who simply did not care about these qualities, the majority of voters saw Clinton's reputation as a reason to reject her candidacy, and thus, this double bind was also costly.

Bill Clinton's presence on the trail was another key constraint demonstrating the double bind Clinton experienced in her run for president. Bill Clinton is an able campaigner, and has been shown to be an incredible force in motivating and connecting with voters. On the other hand, Bill Clinton reminded voters of all of Clinton's baggage—baggage that no other candidate

had on the trail—and chiefly, of Clinton’s time as First Lady, an ultimately female role. If the presidency can be construed as the most masculine of offices, then the role of First Lady can arguably be seen as the most feminine of roles, regardless of who occupies the East Wing (although Hillary moved her office to the West). Perhaps then, though Hillary Clinton’s rhetoric was obviously designed to conjure the impression that she was as capable as any man running for office, the presence of Bill Clinton reminded voters of Clinton’s overt femaleness at a time when she was trying to defy it rhetorically. This connection has been made before in scholarship addressing Hillary’s campaign for president, and thus, further validates the idea that Hillary Clinton could not, try as she might, escape the double bind of being a wife and mother who was also seeking a dominant place in the public, political sphere (see Kenner Muir & Taylor, 2009; Schnoebelen, et al., 2009). Combine this idea with Bill Clinton’s myriad missteps on the trail (that were often exacerbated and re-told over and over again by news media outlets, further establishing the problematic nature of Hillary Clinton’s rhetorical situation as she sought the nomination), his penchant for negative attacks against Obama and the voter uproar that resulted from Bill Clinton’s attempts to ‘defend his wife,’ and it becomes clear that Bill Clinton not only perceptually hindered his wife’s candidacy, but also helped to constrict her actions in a double bind just as sure as any other factor or individual on the trail.

Clinton’s Presentation of Male and Female Traits

Hillary Clinton’s presentation of male traits was far more evident in her campaign rhetoric than her presentation of female traits. The analysis suggests that this was strategic, though not always wise on her part. If one looks at the list of characteristics for male politicians in the review of literature as a set of qualifications for the job of president, it becomes obvious why Clinton crafted her rhetoric in the way she did. As a woman running for president, Clinton

had to demonstrate for voters that she possessed the qualities that most voters associate with the office for which she was running. Indeed, reports released after the campaign ended validated this strategic course. Anne Kornblut (2009b), in her analysis of the 2008 presidential campaign, reported:

In December 2006, right before Clinton made her announcement, [Mark] Penn [Clinton's campaign manager] invoked history in an internal memo that would set the tone for [Clinton's] campaign for the next year. The United States, he argued, held a firmly patriarchal view of the presidency. The campaign should not, he warned, succumb to the temptation to position Clinton as a maternal leader—should not, in other words, run her as too much of a woman (p. 19).

On one hand, given the vast amount of scholarship espousing the constraints on women politicians due to gendered conventions and expectations in our culture, this was somewhat wise advice. After all, men are generally seen as possessing the requisite skills and traits we associate with effective leaders, and the presidency specifically is seen as a masculine office. Thus, for Clinton to achieve elective success, she should have stressed masculine traits and behaviors. However, as this study demonstrates, Penn's views did not adequately account for the unique constraints of the specific race in 2008. Instead, they allowed Obama to enjoy much more latitude in terms of gender traits and behaviors in which he could engage and they failed to address one of the most central questions regarding Hillary Clinton's candidacy in the minds of voters: Can a woman be president?

Additionally, given the marathon that was the Democratic Primary in 2008, Clinton had to demonstrate that she was tough enough to withstand the nomination process and, if she would have made it to November, the general election as well. Her reliance on the male traits of

toughness and strength dominated her campaign speeches and debate performances as she went toe-to-toe against her opponents and convinced voters that a woman could do the job. However, Clinton's predilection for male traits complicated the perception that she was too masculine and lacking warmth and likability. This lack of perceptual likeability was key for Clinton; without appearing likeable among voters, Clinton was seen as less honest and open, further constraining her rhetoric on the trail (Spiker, 2009). Furthermore, in trying to embody a less emotional persona, and thus, distancing herself from voters, Clinton presented a stark contrast between herself and Barack Obama. He, unlike Clinton, seemingly understood that male presidential candidates could more easily embody feminine traits (much like Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton had done before him) in order to present a more warm, empathetic, and thus, sincere persona to voters.

It deserves mentioning that Clinton did not completely avoid female traits in her rhetoric. More often than not, as indicated in Chapter Four, when Clinton would embody feminine traits, it was to create the impression that she was a motherly protector, attempting to care for and nurture others who lacked such protection (i.e. veterans, children, the elderly, those without health care, etc.). But it is equally vital to note that when she adopted such a rhetorical stance, she did so in a way to separate herself from those who were in need of protection. She was embodying maternal rhetoric in a way that allowed her to run as other male politicians have—as a vehement protector of the innocent or the invisible, while showing no weakness on her part. Had no other constraining factors been present on the trail, this tactic might have worked to her benefit. Such a maternal or protecting role of femininity has worked for female politicians in the past (i.e. Margaret Thatcher, Ann Richards, etc.). However, given her consistent stressing of

male traits over female traits, and the myriad other constraints on the trail, such a use of feminine traits failed to bolster Clinton's support among Democratic voters.

In sum, in assessing Clinton's use of male and female traits on the campaign trail, this study of Clinton's rhetorical situation serves as a reminder that female candidates are far more constrained in their choice of image traits to accentuate than male politicians are. By choosing to run as more of a male than female candidate, Clinton provided Obama (and others early on) the opportunity to embody more feminine traits.

Clinton's Use of Masculine and Feminine Issues

Though, as is often the case in presidential elections, myriad issues were discussed during the Democratic Primary in 2008, it is clear that the three most salient issues were health care reform, Iraq, and later in the campaign, the economy. Health care has, in past studies in politics, been considered more of a feminine than a masculine issues, given the associations with the issue for the more feminine qualities of care and nurturance, though this is arguably just as masculine an issue when applied to the legislative arena and concern for budget and legal ramifications are applied to reform. Regardless, Clinton used the issue of health care reform to establish both her nurturing, more feminine qualities in her campaign rhetoric as well as her experience with the issue to demonstrate the sufficiency of her leadership. When she had complete control of her rhetoric during her campaign speeches, Clinton used health care reform as a vehicle to correct the failed (masculine) leadership of the Bush administration—a remedy to correct the view that countless Americans who lacked health care were invisible. Clinton, thus, used this issue to demonstrate her femininity, at least to a basic extent.

Conversely, the war in Iraq and the economy, both clearly masculine issues, were used by Clinton to establish her aptitude for dealing with the masculine demands of the presidency. She

never shied away from either of these issues, showcasing them repeatedly in her campaign speeches and debate performances, demonstrating for primary voters that she had the ability to deal with masculine issues relevant to the nation. Thus, while Clinton's use of masculine issues on the trail did not hinder her campaign rhetoric generally, her specific rhetorical situations, with the myriad constraints posed by her votes and actions on these issues, did complicate her rhetoric. Her vote to authorize the war in Iraq injured her credibility in posing solutions to extricate our forces from the Middle East. Additionally, choosing to focus on health care reform and Iraq, even though the economy was beginning a downward slide late in the campaign, demonstrated that her rhetoric was seemingly too consistent, lacking the adaptation necessary to respond to the dynamic nature of the lengthy primary campaign.

Because the above issues, none of which could be construed as plainly feminine, were the dominant issues of which Clinton spoke during her campaign, Clinton's gender constrained her rhetoric to her detriment. In assuming women would naturally support her candidacy, Clinton apparently felt no inclination to feature women's issues in her campaign speeches or debate performances. She reminded voters of her past initiatives working on behalf of children, women's rights, and education, but failed to focus on any of these issues in any significant way in terms of what she would do to improve these areas once elected president. Arguably, because of her focus on masculine or ungendered issues during her campaign, Clinton once again failed to act in the traditionally successful ways that female politicians have acted in the past, all the while neglecting a potentially helpful voting bloc for her candidacy.

Clinton's Handling of Voter's Gendered Expectations and Assumptions

In terms of her approach to voters' gendered expectations and assumptions, it is clear that Clinton was consistent in trying to assuage any potential fears among voters that a woman could

not handle the job of president. Clinton, throughout her campaign rhetoric, was consistent in demonstrating her ability to deal effectively with masculine issues, in presenting masculine traits to voters, such as strength and toughness and a reliance on her past successes in politics, and in campaigning confidently amongst her male opponents. On the other hand, Clinton arguably erred on the side of presenting herself in too masculine a light, neglecting the public perceptions that she was too private, lacking warmth, and unlikable. In approaching her campaign rhetoric in this way, Clinton was either unaware or simply failed to acknowledge the reality of her rhetorical situation, choosing instead to present herself as the best candidate on the trail, regardless of gender, and ignoring any opportunities she had to connect with voters in a meaningful, more intimate way.

A double bind Clinton faced that highlighted this issue was in acting as a presidential candidate who was at the same time as a former First Lady. The analysis demonstrates that Clinton relied on this time in her life more so than her Senate career to establish her abilities to lead on an executive level. In fact, one of the most problematic aspects of Clinton's rhetorical situation, as shown in Chapters Four and Five, were the votes she cast as a Senator to vote for military action in Iraq. As such, and possibly to rhetorically connect herself to the presidency, she tended to emphasize her time in the White House to establish her leadership abilities. Unfortunately, since her title during this time was clearly gender-coded as feminine, and because she could not rightly claim direct responsibility for many of her husband's successes during his terms as president, the use of her time as First Lady likely complicated the perception of her abilities among her audience members. Beyond the fact that much of the time she was First Lady has been characterized as a turbulent time in American politics and particularly troubling for Democrats, her use of this experience explicitly tied her to a feminine role—a role in which she

seemed rarely comfortable, and one she never seemed to use to her advantage in terms of establishing, if nothing else, her femininity (i.e. her Bosnia gaffe, her divisiveness and secretiveness when working on health care reform, the number of voters who expressed dismay after Clinton stayed married to her husband despite his repeated infidelity, etc.). As such, Clinton's rhetoric espousing her expertise in connection to her time as First Lady was particularly troubling in terms of voter perception, and Clinton's rhetoric on the trail never adequately responded to this issue in any meaningful way.

Indeed, as the analysis has demonstrated in several places, Clinton blatantly ignored the premise that she could not be the president because she was a woman, denying that gender was an issue in any way during the campaign. While this may have seemed a worthy strategy for a candidate who must appear confident in her campaign aspirations and who should avoid appearing to have any major weakness, it neglected the idea that voters do, to some extent at least, use gender stereotypes and expectations to guide their voting behaviors. It is not my intention to assert that Clinton lost the nomination because of these expectations. However, understanding that gender stereotypes form an intangible yet powerful set of tools with which we evaluate information in our daily lives, it seems naïve to assume that voters could have suspended their stereotypes during a significant political campaign. Thus, while Clinton, given the entrapment of the double binds previously articulated, was arguably smart to ignore these beliefs among voters in favor of running as the best candidate rather than the best female candidate, her rhetoric was clearly lacking in terms of addressing the dominant cultural views of American voters.

Clinton and News Media: Implicit and Explicit Sexism

The analysis in this study indicates that the news media both helped and hindered Clinton's candidacy, and thus, served as a constraining element in Clinton's rhetorical situation. On one hand, early in the campaign, news reports about Clinton's candidacy helped establish her as the front-runner among her Democratic rivals, allowing her to more easily adopt an aura of inevitability, expertise, and leadership as she used her own rhetoric to assert the same qualities. On the other hand, as the campaign progressed, the media also reminded voters of Clinton's weaknesses, the movement-like force behind Obama's nomination, and continuously tied Clinton to negative attributes, chiefly her vote to authorize the Iraq war and the missteps of Bill Clinton on the campaign trail. News reports also, in keeping with findings from previous studies, reminded voters of Clinton's gender, running stories about her emotional breakdown (and skepticism about this incident) in New Hampshire, framing analysis of Clinton's campaign around her appearance and sometimes her lack of femininity, and tying her to her familial roles of wife and mother. In general, in assessing the news reports from major newspapers used in this study, it is clear that the media more often than not was implicit in their sexist approach to Clinton's campaign.

Members of the news media were more blatant in their sexism during debate performances, when moderators like Tim Russert, Wolf Blitzer, and Brian Williams would ask hostile questions of Clinton more so than her male rivals, would interrupt her answers more so than her male rivals, and would question her sincerity and integrity. Overall, while I acknowledge that these moments were somewhat isolated in terms of the overall campaign, they do point to the potential power of news media sources during campaigns. As Bystrom (2003b) and Duerst-Lahti (2006) have indicated, media sources remind voters about what to think about

and sometimes, how to think about it. Thus, when moderators who represent news media sources questioned Clinton about her husband's involvement in the campaign and about her inconsistency in dealing with Iraq, and seemed to favor her chief rival, Barack Obama, their behavior could have reinforced perceptions negative to Clinton's candidacy.

The analysis in Chapter Five of this study, particularly Clinton's treatment by the news reporters who served as debate moderators, adds force to Vatz' (2009) argument about the inequality of press coverage of the Democratic primary race in 2008. Vatz claimed, "the favoring of Barack Obama in the mainstream media over Hillary Clinton when the Democratic race whittled down to two was in fact palpable throughout the primaries" (p. 203). When one remembers the overtly hostile lines of questioning from Tim Russert, the interruptions offered by many moderators, including Wolf Blitzer and Brian Williams, and the ways in which the print reporters would question not only Clinton's qualifications, but her likability and honesty, the problems of which Vatz wrote become clarified. The distinction is strengthened when one considers the fact that Obama, even during the most arduous moments on the trail (think here about Jeremiah Wright, allegations that Obama represented slumlords as an attorney, or his association with William Ayers), the press seemingly failed to hold Obama to the same level of accountability they used when dealing with Clinton. Indeed, Kornblut (2009b) reported that many felt that during the 2008 Democratic Primary campaign, "Obama had been given a free pass and undue historical blessing—in short, that race trumped gender" (p. 72). She goes on to note that, as Gloria Steinem pointed out in her infamous *New York Times* op-ed, if a woman with Obama's qualifications had run for president, she never would have been considered as viable, and also pointed out how Clinton's win in New Hampshire (the first ever presidential primary win for a woman) was hardly touted in the press.

Granted, the purpose of this study was not to analyze the news media's treatment of Hillary Clinton, nor was it ever alleged to be a comparison of press coverage offered to the candidates during their campaigns. However, the press, as Duerst-Lahti (2006) has maintained, is the 'great mentioner', focusing voters' attention to certain stories and descriptions that have implications for the outcomes of elections. Additionally, as news reporters comprise the pool for moderators during campaign debates, the objectives and motives of the news media were a vital aspect of this analysis. Considering this idea, and in looking back on the analysis offered in this study, news media in various ways greatly constrained Clinton's rhetorical situation—both the nature of the situation, and how she was able to respond to it during her debate performances.

Clinton's rhetorical situation, in sum, was highly constrained by news reports about her campaign and by news reporter moderators during the debates. For her part, Clinton would attempt to counteract any negative effects from news media sources by redirecting answers back to more positive issues, or by critiquing moderators for their lack of parity. But these strategies, in hindsight, often seemed inept in the face of Clinton's larger rhetorical situation.

Hillary Clinton's Leadership Style

Finally, an examination of the style of leadership embodied by Hillary Clinton's rhetoric during her campaign is warranted. After all, any candidate running for president must exhibit leadership qualities in order to convince voters that she or he is up to the task of assuming the presidency. But given Clinton's unique position as the first viable female candidate for her major party's nomination for president, this would certainly seem to be a dominant purpose of her campaign. Indeed, while Clinton did exhibit several qualities of effective leadership for both male and female leaders, her rhetoric also reflected many of the negative qualities associated with male leadership. In general, the analysis in this study demonstrates Clinton's rejection of

feminine leadership; instead, based on the constraints of her specific rhetorical situation, she focused on traditionally male leadership factors.

As the review of salient leadership research in Chapter One indicated, many women in politics choose to either reject a male style of leadership altogether or choose to employ a blended, or ‘integrative’ style of leadership embodying both masculine and feminine styles. Clinton utilized much more of a masculine style of leadership, stressing her own abilities to get things done, her own expertise, and her own skills. Arguably it was the context of running for the presidency, combined with her own previous experiences in leadership roles, that compelled Clinton to choose such a direction. As Clinton was clearly avoiding running as a woman, it made sense for her to embody a masculine style of leadership.

Unfortunately, as Clinton attempted to embody masculine leadership qualities, she also embodied some of the negative aspects of male leadership. When pressed about her decisions on Iraq, she would often blame others (chiefly George W. Bush) for her error. She was hesitant to apologize for any decision she had made, and she was quick to claim credit for the successes of others (primarily those of her husband’s administration) when she had no clear hand in making the policy in question a success. These side effects, as they may be conceived, of adopting the masculine style of leadership problematized her image among voters, feeding the belief that her ambitions sometimes overpowered her honesty and sincerity, and thus, further isolated her from voters and diminished her ability to argue that she was the candidate of change. Thus, while most conceptions of leadership carry with them potential negative consequences, it seems unwise, in hindsight, for Clinton to have adopted this leadership style as it added to, rather than helped to correct, many of the constraints of her rhetorical situation during the campaign.

In sum, to answer the over-arching question of whether or not gender actually mattered in terms of Clinton's failure in 2008, it is now clear that it did. Because of the complex and dynamic nature of a presidential campaign, it is difficult (if not impossible) to isolate any one particular factor as fundamental to the success or failure of a particular candidate. Indeed, based on the methodology employed in this study and the subsequent analysis, I cannot establish with certainty that voters, super delegates, or pundits actually accepted or rejected Hillary Clinton on the basis of her gender alone. However, the goal of this study was never to determine why Clinton lost, nor was it to answer such a question with an answer focused solely on Clinton's gender. Based on the vast amount of news reports about the campaign and how these reporters discussed Clinton's gender, the internal information from the Clinton campaign as disseminated to authors and reporters regarding gender during the campaign, and the nature of Clinton's rhetoric in her speech and debate performances, in addition to the sheer number of connections made between Clinton's rhetorical situation and the scholars who have studied gender and politics previously, gender absolutely mattered for Clinton and for the other participants in her rhetorical situation during the campaign. The analysis and subsequent conclusions derived from this study demonstrate that gender was a guiding factor, not necessarily in terms of voting behavior, but certainly in terms of the formation of Clinton's rhetorical situation during the campaign and with regard to the rhetoric she employed while engaged in that situation. Based on this answer, as well as the previously articulated conclusions, a discussion of the implications, limitations of this study, and future avenues of research will follow.

Implications / Limitations / Suggestions for Future Research

Scholars may well be discussing the implications of Hillary Clinton's candidacy for years to come, as it was incredibly historic in nature. Granted, Hillary Clinton was a unique candidate

as the spouse of a former president who achieved notoriety for being the first former First Lady to win elective office. Because of that she did begin on a different footing from what any future woman candidate for president will likely have. However, that background was in and of itself the source of double binds and was wrapped in gender issues. Based on the analysis conducted in this study, and the conclusions previously articulated, I want to focus the last section of this study on a few key ideas that I feel may resonate.

First, I think that Hillary Clinton's candidacy can serve as an important site of information for future female presidential candidates. On one hand, Clinton's rhetorical situation should serve as a beacon of hope to female presidential candidates. Though this study addresses many of the faults regarding Clinton's campaign rhetoric, even the most cynical cannot doubt that Hillary Clinton's campaign was very successful on several fronts. She demonstrated very clearly that a woman can raise tens of millions of dollars to fuel a presidential campaign, can win primaries and caucuses, and can be construed as a front-runner for a major party's nomination. It is my sincere hope that other women will, one day, follow in Clinton's footsteps and finally break the 'highest, hardest glass ceiling.'

On the other hand, I also believe that this study demonstrates that Clinton's candidacy should also serve as a cautionary tale for women politicians, at least those seeking the presidency. It is clear that the double binds that have been discussed in myriad scholarly studies are tangible and can derail even a powerful candidate's campaign. It is equally clear that gender, in terms of how politicians embody theirs and display these qualities to voters, still does matter. Hillary Clinton clearly, and explicitly, did not want to realize the reality of this most omnipresent facet of her rhetorical situation. Yet it seems obvious now, in hindsight, that voters, reporters, and her rivals all knew that being a woman running for president carried with it many challenges.

Granted, Hillary Rodham Clinton was certainly a unique female presidential candidate. However, because the analysis in this study confirmed many of the conclusions that previous scholars have identified in terms of the barriers women face seeking elective office, it would be wise for future women presidential candidates to learn from Clinton's experience. Based on this study, I cannot establish that a purely feminine or even a blended masculine and feminine approach to the presidency will be sufficient to convince voters of a politician's abilities. But what can be established, in Hillary Clinton's case, at least, is that ignoring gender comes at a very high price. Future women who seek the presidency (or other executive-level political offices) would be wise to use Clinton's experiences as evidence that they should not ignore their gender, nor the gendered stereotypes and expectations of our culture, if they hope to enjoy elective success.

This study also indicates that while consistency can be a prized attribute in some contexts, Clinton's consistency cost her in rhetorical terms. The examination of Clinton's key speech and debate performances indicates that she was very consistent with her rhetoric, using many of the same phrases and ideas from the beginning of her campaign until the conclusion some eighteen months later. The Iraq war and health care, along with her lambasting of the Bush administration failures were omnipresent in all aspects of the campaign. Time and time again, Clinton stressed her toughness and her strength. She also was consistent in downplaying the historic nature of her own candidacy. All of these ideas would seem to feed a positive assessment of her campaign. However, it demonstrates something that Bitzer's rhetorical lens specifically brings to the fore: political candidates must be able to adapt to their rhetorical situations because, quite clearly in national politics on such an enormously important stage, the rhetorical situation is dynamic. Bill Clinton's missteps and gaffes on the trail, strategic changes in Obama's

campaign, the downturn in the economy, the length of the nomination process for Democrats and the short duration for Republicans—all of these factors could not have been predicted from the outset of the campaign, and all of them, among many others, needed to be addressed through Hillary Clinton's use of rhetoric. But Clinton remained consistent, using many of the same rhetorical strategies throughout the campaign, and thus, her rhetoric seemed disjointed and unable to keep up.

The idea that Clinton was consistent in her rhetoric makes it necessary to address one of the limitations of the current study. Though the artifacts chosen for this study spanned both the key moments as well as the chronological breadth of the 2008 Democratic primary race, it is possible that analysis of the other speeches and/or debate performances on the trail could challenge the assertions presented in this analysis. All scholarly endeavors like this one must include limitations on the ideas or objects of study to include. Thus, it is possible that the conclusions drawn in this study do not match wholly or at all with other artifacts from this campaign. As such, this limitation should challenge future scholars to consider the speeches and debate performances not included within the scope of this analysis to confirm, deny, or adjust the findings of this study.

Finally, from a methodological point of view, the analysis and conclusions of this study should foster future scholarship regarding Hillary Clinton's communication approaches and the study of female politicians in general. The rhetorical critique embodied in this study is certainly a valuable approach, addressing not only Hillary Clinton's discourse itself, but also the conditions in which it was presented and how it was received by various segments of her national audience. Still, it should be noted that Bitzer's rhetorical situation as a perspective from which to evaluate and critique discourse (like almost all methods for engaging in rhetorical analysis and critique) is

a framework that has been hotly contested over the years for Bitzer's privileging of context over actual discourse in establishing the meaning of rhetoric (see Vatz, 1973) and for the lack of guidance in terms of establishing that discourse which is rhetorical and that which is not (see Larson, 1970). However, the entire enterprise of rhetorical criticism, from the selection of artifacts and methods to the formulation of conclusions, while grounded in cogent arguments and modes of proof, is inherently subjective. Campbell (1972) argued, "'good' criticism is not objective and impersonal; it is evaluative. It makes clear and unmistakable judgments about the quality, worth, and consequences of the discourse" (p. 21-22). After all, as Campbell has asserted, "The purpose of criticism is to help the reader become a more appreciative, insightful audience for persuasive discourse" (p. 22). As such, this study represents valuable insights regarding Clinton's candidacy, but it is only one vantage point from which to view this historic campaign. Future scholars could easily test the assertions made within this analysis via any number of other methodological perspectives (focus groups, survey data, content analysis, etc) in order to confirm or deny the findings that I have presented here. Similarly, other philosophical vantage points, such as postmodernism, could also be used to critique Clinton's discourse or the role gender played in 2008 as these philosophies have guided countless academic inquiries in the past and have, thus, expanded our knowledge fruitfully (Mumby, 1997). It is only by approaching historical campaigns such as Hillary Clinton's from multiple, triangulated points that we as a discipline can hope to understand all of the intricate facets of such a complex amalgam of factors.

Hillary Clinton's candidacy was an important step forward for our culture in terms of recognizing what women can achieve in the public, political sphere. In spite of many obstacles, Clinton did put eighteen million cracks in the highest and hardest glass ceiling in a way that no

woman had ever come close to achieving before. It is the hope of this scholar that Clinton will not be the last woman to stake a swing at that ceiling. And hopefully, with the insights fostered by this study and several others that have also investigated the ways in which Clinton's campaign functioned, such a feat will one day be possible and we can finally welcome Madame President into the Oval Office of the White House.

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